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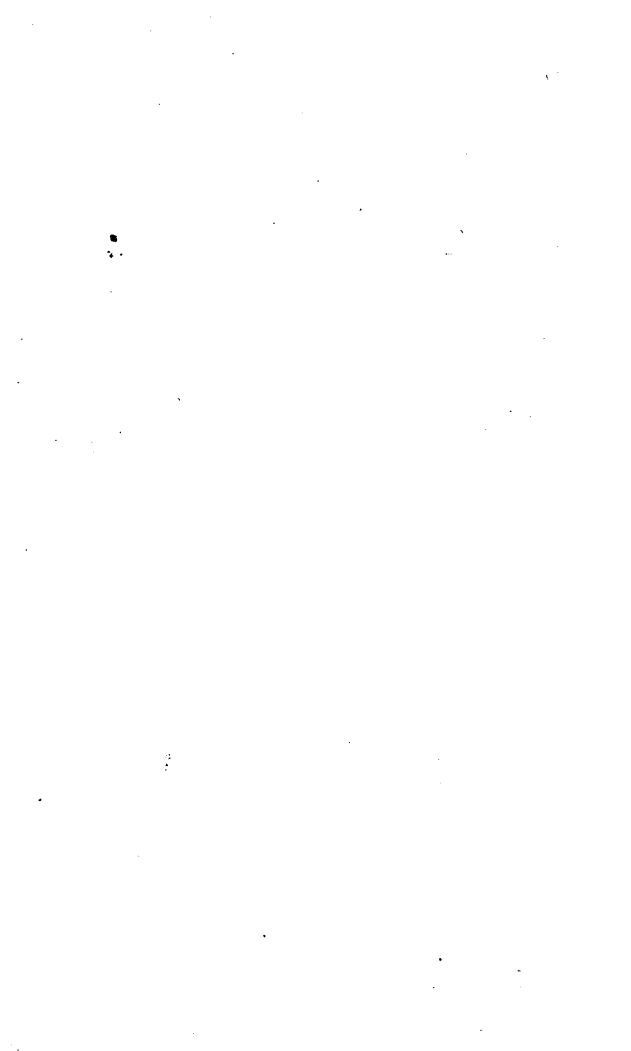
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**VIEWS OF COMMUNION,**

**BY**

**HALL, FULLER, GRIFFIN AND RIPLEY.**



# CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN TWO LAYMEN,

ON

STRICT AND MIXED COMMUNION;

IN WHICH THE PRINCIPAL ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR  
OF THE LATTER PRACTICE, ARE STATED, AS  
NEARLY AS POSSIBLE, IN THE WORDS OF ITS  
MOST POWERFUL ADVOCATE,

THE REV. ROBERT HALL.

---

BY J. G. FULLER.

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WITH

DR. GRIFFIN'S LETTER ON COMMUNION,  
AND THE  
REVIEW OF IT BY PROFESSOR RIPLEY  
OF NEWTON.

SECOND EDITION.

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## PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

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IN the recent edition of the works of the Rev. Robert Hall, his writings in favor of Mixed Communion have found a prominent place. The controversy respecting the terms of communion has thus been revived, from a quarter that seems to view with concern the prosperity of the Baptist churches in this country ; or, rather, an attack has been renewed.

Whether they that conscientiously follow the pattern which the Scriptures exhibit, deserve the reproaches so liberally heaped upon them, let candor, let charity herself, judge. who rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

Hitherto scarcely any proposition has been more obviously correct, or more generally admitted, than that baptism is a prerequisite to communion at the Lord's table. Mr. Hall asserts that it is not; and on the ground that it is not, he rears the splendid superstructure of his theory. Before we rely on such a foundation, it becomes us to examine it thoroughly. It is

with the hope of aiding the candid in this examination, that these Conversations, from the pen of a son of the late Rev. Andrew Fuller, are now for the first time presented to the American public. They are not intended to supersede a Reply in a different form; but, though simple and unpretending, they are lucid and powerful.

To the attention of all the friends of truth, especially of those who read Mr. Hall's polemic works, this production commends itself by a variety of considerations.

It is a candid, fair and able discussion of the subject between M. a Mixed Communion Baptist, and S. a Strict Communion Baptist. It is *candid*, because it is written in a style becoming a Christian, while it introduces two brethren discussing the subject like friends and inquirers after truth and duty. It is *fair*, on the part of the author, because he has permitted M. to use *the very language and arguments of Mr. Hall*, the fountain of all arguments for mixed communion. And it is *able*, because Mr. Fuller has exposed, with great clearness, the fallacy of Mr. Hall's arguments, and shown that his position is untenable with consistency on his own ground; and that his principles would be attended with injurious consequences to religion, were they put in practice.

Another recommendation of the work is, that Mr. Fuller is a member of Mr. Hall's church, and perhaps as

great an admirer of Mr. Hall in other respects, as any person. But the spirit and language with which he writes on this subject, prove him as much the friend and advocate of peace and Christian union, and of the interests of truth, as his pastor. Let the reader judge. And it will be admitted that Mr. Fuller has had a good opportunity to know the influence of mixed communion when reduced to practice.

In this edition, the numerous references to Mr. Hall's writings have been carefully adapted to the American edition of his works; a few notes have been added, and appropriately distinguished; several that were inserted by the author have been omitted, as having a local rather than general interest; besides a few other omissions, a few verbal alterations have been made, without affecting the sense: and in one instance, (concerning the disciples mentioned in the 19th chapter of the Acts,) a different view from that of the author is exhibited.

The venerable Dr. Griffin rejects Mr. Hall's fundamental principle. He maintains that baptism is a prerequisite to communion, but that something very different from immersion is Baptism. He may be considered as the representative of those great and respectable bodies of Christians, who still continue to practise infant sprinkling. As it is desirable to let the subject

be fairly viewed on all sides, the editor of the *Conversations* is happy in being able to lay also before the serious inquirer, Dr. Griffin's Letter on Communion, and the Review of it by Professor Ripley, of the Newton Theological Institution.

May we all know and do the will of Him who 'suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.'

P. CHASE.

*Watertown, April 10, 1831.*

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NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Shortly after the publication of the first edition, the melancholy intelligence of Mr. Hall's death was received. The loss of so good and great a man cannot fail of being sincerely lamented by us all. For surely, we may admire his splendid talents, and admit, most freely, and with gratitude, the uncommon excellencies of his character, and yet consider him to have erred on the subject discussed in the following pages.

The demand for a second edition has afforded an opportunity for revising the book, and for making it more conformable to the Editor's design, and more worthy of an extensive circulation.

*Jan. 18, 1832.*

## PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR.

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THE following pages are the result of a careful examination, for the third time, of the arguments usually advanced in favor of mixed communion. This examination is assignable, not so much to the recent publication of a compendium of those arguments, from the pen of their most eloquent advocate, as to an expectation, generally entertained, that mixed communion might shortly become a *practical* question in the church of which the writer is a member. This circumstance has certainly induced him to devote more attention to the controversy, than its merits, as a speculative inquiry, would either demand or justify; and as the design, though for a time abandoned, may not be entirely relinquished, he offers no apology for respectfully submitting to the candid and serious consideration of all who feel interested in the inquiry, the reasons, which appear to him, to justify an adherence to the confessedly *scriptural* pattern of restricted communion.

If the most cordial esteem for many of those whose sentiments are opposed to his own, both Baptists and Pedobaptists, and a grateful recollec-

tion of friendly intercourse for a series of years, *might* induce neutrality, or even a silent opposition to such an innovation, this formal defence, of what, in the opinion of the writer, is unequivocally "Christian Communion," would never have been published. But the inquiry, What is truth? recognizes not personal friendships, but Christian principles; and when the constitution of a church is invaded, or threatened, it becomes the duty of every member who believes it is scriptural, instead of timidly resigning the cause, under the specious pretence of preserving peace, temperately, but firmly, to defend it to the utmost of his ability. The circumstance of our opponents being Christians, and Christian friends, while it must necessarily render an opposition to their measures extremely painful and distressing, may not for a moment be pleaded in justification of a compromise of principle; and should we ever impose on ourselves such a manifest delusion, we should richly deserve the ridicule and contempt which would be our inevitable portion. "The wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable:" and that peace which is purchased by the prostration of principle, is an ignominious peace—unscriptural in its origin, unholy in its nature, pernicious in its tendency, and eminently precarious in its tenure and duration.

One circumstance, and one alone (for "religious inquiry is an affair of *principles*, not of *persons*," ) induces the writer, in this place, to make a special, individual allusion to his highly respected friend, whose publications have again fanned to a flame

the dying embers of this unhappy controversy—that honored individual is his Pastor; nor, apart from the revival of this dispute, and certain irregularities to which his theory naturally tends, has the pleasure with which that important connection was contemplated been in the least degree impaired. Unconvinced by his reasonings on terms of communion,\* the writer would reflect discredit on

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\* It is a most singular coincidence, that at the very time when Mr. Hall's "*Reasons for Christian Communion*" made their appearance, the Unitarians, (for *they* also, it seems, have their bigots and liberals!) had just terminated a magazine controversy, in which certain reasons, not altogether dissimilar, were assigned in favor of *Antichristian* communion, or a church fellowship of Unitarian believers and avowed unbelievers! A Mr. Noah Jones lamented the existence of such mixed communion, and ventured to protest against it; when, as he might rationally have expected, he was liberally assailed, by a host of latitudinarians, with the convenient common-place phrases, "*intolerance, bigotry, narrow-mindedness, sectarianism,*" &c. the special accusation of "*schism*" not excepted! Of the REASONS advanced by the liberal party, in favor of the *right* of unbelievers to a place in Unitarian Societies, and against the *impolicy* of rejecting them, the following may serve as a specimen:

THEIR ERROR IS SINCERE, CONSCIENTIOUS, AND INVOLUNTARY. "They *cannot* believe." "There is no doubt, as most of them are *sincere* they would be glad to have their minds settled, and their anxiety relieved. Some of them are desirous to hear their difficulties discussed." "Shall we be following the example of Jesus, or acting upon his spirit, when we say to our brethren, for an *involuntary* difference of opinion,—'Stand by, for we are holier than you?'" "A great distinction ought to be made between the irreligious infidel, and the serious, the religious sceptic, who is anxious, but



himself, were he insensible, either to the charms of his eloquence in the Christian cause, or to the superior attractions of his Christian character. And though he would be ashamed to apologize to the

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*unable* to obtain conviction; who is moral, *conscientious*, and devout." "May not the opinions of the unbeliever be the result of as *diligent, candid, honest, sincere*, investigation, as those believed to be true by the Christian? Is it not within the range of probability, that, from the evidence which strikes his mind, his conclusions may be *correct*? (!) Such an assumption, surely, is not unfair; why, then, should this reformer presume to hold him up to notice as an unworthy member of any society? Would he not have exhibited more modesty, had he acquired more correct notions of Christian *charity*, before he threw out his illiberal insinuations against men who are as *sincere* and *virtuous*, as they are benevolent and intelligent?"

CHARITY. "The spirit of Christianity is an *enlarged*, a *benevolent* spirit, which fears no imaginary contamination, and can extend the right-hand of fellowship to every *sincere* and *virtuous* man." "In comparison with a society of men acting upon such *narrow notions* of the genuine spirit of Christianity, as Mr. J. seems to entertain, how much superior would be his 'curious Christian church, consisting of a mixed assemblage of Christian believers, and Deists, Jews, and Mahometans.'" "Jesus was no respecter of persons. He was not so exclusively squeamish, or delicately particular, as Mr. J. is desirous the modern Unitarians should be. He deemed it to be of more importance to impress upon his followers, that they would be known to be his disciples, if they '*loved one another*.'"

WEAK IN THE FAITH. "If they do not, with us, believe in the divine mission of Jesus, they believe he was the greatest of men, superior even to Socrates." "Let us set the example of a true, an universal toleration: and receive every one of every denomination, however dark in faith. It has been said, 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye;' and we must first abjure our

most elevated of his fellow-men, for a firm resistance to what he sincerely believes to be an unscriptural and unauthorized innovation, yet he feels he should be deficient in the respect due to a

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own best and most sacred principles before we can attempt to cast them out."

**GOD WILL RECEIVE HIM.** "Do we not believe, that if virtuous and true to his convictions, he will be acceptable to his Maker now, and the heir of eternal life hereafter? May he not possibly be our companion in future? and shall we shun him in this life?"

**YOU REJECT BETTER MEN THAN YOU RECEIVE.** "He may be an object of as great, if not of greater approbation, in the sight of his Maker, than one who has *faith* to remove mountains, and yet has not the *spirit* of his Master." "Should a man make a confession of Christ, Mr. J. is willing to be his associate, and to allow him all the privileges of a society of Christians: if he be a Gardiner, a Bonner, or a Horseley, he will give him the right-hand of fellowship. But should he be a Hobbes, a Collins, a Hume, or a Dr. Franklin, he must be banished a Unitarian society!"

**A NEW CASE.** Mr. Jones and his friends had intimated that our Saviour and his apostles drew a line of separation between believers and unbelievers; and doubtless they thought this was conclusive. But they were mistaken! *a new case* presents itself! "I am prepared to say, (says one of these advocates for mixed communion,) that in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, *there did not exist* such a body of men as the present class of unbelievers; I mean, inquiring, *conscientious* unbelievers."

**IMPOLICY OF STRICT COMMUNION.** "Would it not be very improper to do any thing which might prevent unbelievers from coming to our religious meetings, where, they have the best chance of receiving instruction in the evidences of Christianity, of hearing judicious answers to their objections?" &c. "Will it be wise in us to exclude them from, perhaps, the only opportunity they have

pastor, were he to withhold; what, under other circumstances, might be presumed unnecessary, or even officious—an unequivocal expression of the most cordial attachment to his ministry, accompanied by the sincere prayer that his *Christian* services may be prolonged to a very distant period.

The writer feels no disposition to attribute to personal disesteem, the remarks contained in some of the publications alluded to, relative to his deceased parent; since, apart from the present controversy, few, if any, have more respectfully eulogized his character, than the writer of those remarks. While, therefore, certain matters of fact excepted, he believes they are totally unfounded, he is at no loss to account for them on other principles; he is only astonished, that a mind so exalted should be capable, even in controversy, of condescending to an indiscriminate depreciation of the performance of an op-

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of gaining these advantages, and of hearing the truth as it is in Jesus? Will it be a proof of wisdom, instead of preaching to those who require to be convinced, to confine our instructions to those alone who need no enlightening, whose principles have long been confirmed?" "How are we to make converts to our own clearer light, if we close our doors on all who are not of our manner of thinking? Where else are they to hear our sentiments?"

In the course of the controversy, an avowed Deist unites in the hue and cry against the bigotry and intolerance of poor Mr. Jones, and of one or two others who had ventured to defend the plan of restricted communion; eulogizes the liberality and candor of the more enlightened party; and congratulates his brethren on the "*glowing eloquence*" with which their rights had been asserted.

ponent, by the imputation of *dishonorable motives*. It is a little singular too, and rather amusing, to witness such a disproportionate expenditure of ingenuity and labor, to invalidate arguments so very feeble and equivocal! The reader is informed, that Mr. Fuller's pamphlet on Communion is "the feeblest of all his productions." Then, surely, it was scarcely worth while violently to torture and pervert his motives, and even to insinuate, that, *within a few months of his decease, he employed himself in making experiments on the credulity of his surviving admirers!* To say nothing of the injustice of such insinuations, where existed the necessity of employing them against arguments so feeble and precarious? The intelligent reader will scarcely fail to suspect, that a production which required *such* a mode of reply is not exactly so insignificant as is pretended. But, whatever be the merits of the pamphlet, (of which the present writer will scarcely be considered an impartial judge,) it is rigidly due to its author, and to the cause which be at least *honestly* pleaded, to supply a slight omission in the "Reasons for Christian Communion," in relation to the transaction at Cambridge; which might, and which should have been supplied, by its eloquent author, from the very first page of the pamphlet he has so singularly criticised. "So far (says Mr. Fuller,) have I been from indulging a sectarian, or party spirit, that my desire for communion with all who are friendly to the Saviour, has, in one instance, led me practically to deviate from my general sentiments on the subject—THE REFLECTION ON WHICH, HOWEVER, HAVING AFFORDED ME NO SATISFACTION, I DO NOT INTEND

TO REPEAT IT.\* The partial representation alluded to, in connection with the concealment of the avowed motives, and the imputation of reasons which had no existence, while it is eminently calculated to mislead, and doubtless *will* mislead no inconsiderable number of Mr. Hall's admirers, furnishes a lesson we shall do well to remember—we see now, with all their pretensions to superior liberality, what an ungenerous advantage will be taken by our opponents, if, in an unguarded moment, under the influence of *feeling*, or of affection-

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\* The writer desires in this place to express his grateful acknowledgments to Mr. Ivimey and Mr. Kinghorn, for their prompt and generous defence of his deceased parent, from the charge of *controversial duplicity*. He presumes he may take the liberty of transcribing two or three short extracts from their publications.

"I fearlessly ask," says Mr. Ivimey, "Who, that knew Mr. Fuller's doctrine and manner of life, will be of Mr. Hall's opinion—that Andrew Fuller should leave a manuscript, with the solemn charge to print it after his death, if Mr. Hall should publish in support of open communion; and this, not as 'the result of his deliberate and settled conviction,' but 'rather with a view to provoke farther inquiry?' I could almost as soon believe, that the Apostle Paul wrote his Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, merely with a view to provoke inquiry as to what could be said of the merit of man's good works, and not to establish the doctrine of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law."—*Communion at the Lord's Table Regulated by the Revealed Will of Christ, not Party but Christian Communion*. Pref. p. 7.

"Mr. Hall insinuates," observes Mr. Kinghorn, "that Mr. Fuller did not *sincerely believe* that strict communion was founded on truth. He produces what he calls 'circumstances,' which led him to believe that 'all along Mr.

ate persuasion, we should permit ourselves to forget the dictates of a cool and deliberate judgment.

Two objections have generally been urged against a *conversational* discussion of a controversy—that the arguments of an opponent are feebly constructed, and that victory is invariably awarded to the author. Both these objections, the present writer has endeavored to obviate! for while a sense of delicacy induced him to represent the controversy as between *two laymen*, (which is not entirely a fiction,) the arguments in favor of mixed communion have been generally and copiously quoted from those publications to which the friends of that system are proud to refer us,

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Fuller felt some hesitation on the subject, and that his mind was not completely made up; and afterwards adds, 'Hence I am compelled to consider his posthumous tract rather as a trial of what might be adduced on that side of the controversy, with a view to provoke farther inquiry, than the result of deliberate and settled conviction.' So then, Mr. Fuller wrote a pamphlet in defence of what *he did not fully believe*, and authorized Dr. Newman, on conditions, to publish it as *his opinion*! If Mr. Fuller did this, he was not the man we took him to be. It is very surprising that any one should suspect him, who has any acquaintance with his character, and who has read only the first sentence of his work. It was written in the form of a letter to a friend; and he begins it by saying, 'The long and intimate friendship that I have lived in, and hope to die in, with several who are differently minded with me on this subject, may acquit me of any other motive in what I write, than A DESIRE TO VINDICATE WHAT APPEARS TO ME TO BE THE MIND OF CHRIST.'"—*Arguments against the Practice of Mixed Communion, with Preliminary Observations on Rev. R. Hall's Reasons for Christian, in opposition to Party Communion*, pp. 23, 24.

as their highest human authority.\* Nor, in a single instance, has the writer represented his opponent as conceding the point at issue—an artifice as flimsy as it is contemptible; since, whatever be the conviction of either party, the public will not, in deference to our self-complacency, resign their undoubted privilege of judging for themselves.

It may possibly be regretted, that so much attention has been devoted to the nature of John's baptism: it will be proper, therefore, to observe, in explanation, that it was dictated, not so much by a conviction of the intrinsic importance of the argument in its bearing on the general question, as by the fact, that some highly respected individuals have changed their views on the terms of communion, avowedly in deference to *that argument alone*, as illustrated by our eloquent opponent!

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The preceding observations, with the exception of the notes, were written in 1826. Since then, many circumstances have concurred to induce the writer to submit to the candid attention of his denomination, the pages originally written, but not now published, with a special reference to a particular church. The tendency of mixed

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\* On Terms of Communion. *Second Edition.*

Essential Difference between Christian Baptism and the Baptism of John. *Third Edition.*

Reply to Mr. Kinghorn. *First Edition.*

Reasons for Christian, in Opposition to Party Communion. *First Edition.*

communion is becoming every day more apparent, and its deteriorating and dissociating influence, more visible. Every successive month brings "*certain strange things*" to our ears—a standing ordinance of Jesus Christ displaced, contemned, and decried—its very mention deprecated—natural allusions to it studiously avoided—the almost total suppression, in the Christian ministry, of one part of "the counsel of God"—the reception of members, without *any* baptism, without Christian baptism *notwithstanding* a renunciation of the ceremony performed in infancy, and without *any* public confession of faith in Christ, beyond a knowledge of character and personal appearance in the temple of mixed communion—clandestine admissions of unbaptized persons to the Lord's-table—attempts to enforce mixed communion—unnecessary and unwelcome collision with Pedobaptist churches\*—the constitution of Baptist churches altered by way of experiment—the necessary expulsion of conscientious Strict Baptists—defective discipline—a general relaxation from primitive Christianity—a disposition to sacrifice another "non-essential," the Lord's Supper, whenever the supposed interests of peace and union shall make the demand—private baptisms, in compliance with the special desire of Pedobaptist members—the celebration of believers' baptism in the morning, and of infant baptism in the afternoon of the same

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\* For some admirable observations on this subject, combining with sound argument, the most genuine Christian feeling towards our Pedobaptist brethren, the reader is referred to Mr. Ivimey's "*Baptism the Scriptural and Indispensable Qualification for Communion at the Lord's Table.*" Chapter II.



day, in the same place, the morning preacher being especially requested not to plead for his views of baptism, by a non-compliance with which, the Pedobaptist members were greatly offended!—These are indications, (and others might be enumerated,) sufficiently clear and strong, of the tendency of mixed communion.

One portentous result of the proposed innovation, conceded by our eloquent opponent himself, ought never to be forgotten—THE EXTINCTION OF BAPTIST CHURCHES! “Were that practice universally to prevail,” he says, “the mixture of Baptists and Pedobaptists in Christian societies would probably, ere long, be such, that the appellation of Baptist might be found, not so properly applicable to churches as to individuals.” In this, then, all parties are agreed—that the tendency of mixed communion is *to annihilate, as such, all the Baptist churches in Christendom!—to dissolve the only community of Christians which* (in the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton,) *never symbolized with the church of Rome!—to unchurch the only churches in the world, in which* (our opponents themselves being judges,) *the ordinances of Jesus Christ are kept as they were delivered!* “They that have ears to hear, let them hear!”

On this subject, Mr. Kinghorn observes, that “the greatest enemies the Baptists have, cannot wish for more than to see them placed in the situation to which Mr. Hall’s system would, by his own confession, conduct them;—without churches of their own—merely individuals blended with others of opposite views—neutralized in their statements—with ministers who, perhaps, are not

Baptists, or who if they are, in that liberal state of things would surely not be such "*bigots*," as to run the risk of offending any of their hearers by pleading for *baptism*—and surrounded by those who directly or indirectly would continually be repeating the sound, that positive ordinances are of very little consequence, and whether they are received or rejected is of no importance, provided every one is fully persuaded in his own mind! It is time for us in this state of things, to act with circumspection and becoming firmness. It is manifestly the duty of the members of our churches, and of those who sustain the office of deacons and ministers, to put the question to themselves and to each other—*Do you wish to promote the dissolution and ruin of the Baptist denomination, as such?* If you *do*, Mr. Hall tells you his system will effect the purpose: but if you *do not*, take heed to your ways!"\*

Whether the sentiments advanced in the following pages, or their publication, be approved or disapproved, the writer hopes he shall at least obtain credit for *sincerity*. He has *not* written by way of "experiment;" but from a "deep and deliberate conviction," on the one hand, that the system of mixed communion is not "from heaven," but "of men,"—an infringement on the authority of the Christian Legislator, neither right nor wise; and, on the other hand, that the cause, which he has the

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\* *Arguments against the Practice of Mixed Communion*, pp. 26, 27. An unanswerable epitome of the whole controversy, comprised in a few pages, at a very moderate price.

honor to advocate, is unequivocally the cause of God and truth—of peace and “Christian communion.”

In conclusion, he would merely observe, that should he be instrumental in convincing only a few, of the duty of adhering, in the constitution of their churches, to the confessedly “natural and the prescribed order” of the Christian ordinances, they will possess an advantage peculiarly their own—*their honest conviction will be in no danger of being invalidated, by the imputation that they have surrendered their judgment to the authority of “A GREAT NAME.”*

BRISTOL, 1828.

## CONVERSATION I.

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GENERAL AND PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

## ANALYSIS.

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THE controversy introduced by M., a Mixed Communion Baptist—Christian and party communion. The Anti-sectarian sect. All Christians entitled to the privileges of the Christian church, but not in deviation from the order of divine appointment. Pious Pedobaptists entitled to the privileges of church fellowship. But their title does not involve our obligation to unite with them. Their uniform willingness and desire to unite with Baptists, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, accounted for. Dr. Dwight's defence of strict communion, in which he is supported by Dr. Doddridge. The consciences of Pedobaptists their directory, but not ours. Our actions must be regulated by our own consciences. Further discussion proposed. The feelings of a Christian no certain criterion of truth. Feeling should be subject to an enlightened judgment, and both must agree with the mind of Christ. Strict communion not opposed to the genius of the gospel. Nor a mortification of our best and holiest propensities. Occasional communion. A worse mixed communion alleged against us, acknowledged and defended. In receiving Christians to church fellowship, we must recognize the authority of the head of the church. Illustration of the principle on which we advocate strict communion. No bigotry in this. Baptism, it is universally acknowledged, *was* a term of communion: therefore a term of communion still, unless the law which made it such was of a temporary obligation, or has since been abrogated. If the law *be* abrogated, where is the authority for restricting baptism to believers? If it *be not* abrogated, that is our authority for strict communion. Let our opponents acknowledge the commission as a whole, or not at all. Invitation to further discussion accepted. M. proposes to quote Mr. Hall. John's baptism.

## CONVERSATIONS ON COMMUNION.

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### CONVERSATION I.

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*M.* I have just been reading Mr. Hall's "REASONS FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNION;" and they are so clear and so conclusive, my friend, that I cannot help hoping they will convince even *you*!

*S.* Indeed! and of what do you suppose they will convince me?

*M.* Of the duty of "Christian Communion."

*S.* But I am convinced of that already.

*M.* Not you, indeed: yours is "*Party Communion*."\*

*S.* But I hope the party to which you and I belong, are *Christians*. And surely communion with those who are not only Christians in com-

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\* "It is no sin to belong to a *party*; for that unavoidably results from the exercise of private judgment, and the tendency to union in kindred minds. Those who profess to belong to *no party*, seem to be little aware that *they are themselves a party*. They have some very respectable leaders, and they are the ANTI-SECTARIAN SECT."—DR. NEWMAN. *Baptism an Indispensable Pre-requisite to Communion at the Lord's Table.*

mon with other denominations, but who, in distinction from them, have avowed their Christianity in the precise mode which Christ expressly appointed for that purpose, must be *Christian* communion.

*M.* Still it is *party* communion, being restricted to Christians of *one party* only : but Mr. Hall has proved that *all* Christians are entitled to the eucharist.

*S.* A position which no one denies. Undoubtedly, they are entitled, in the strictest sense of the term, not only to the Lord's supper, but to all the privileges of the Christian church ; but it does not follow that they are entitled to any, *in deviation from the order of divine appointment*. Neither are baptism and the Lord's supper privileges only : they are also duties, incumbent on all believers. But then, He who enjoined their observance, also fixed *the order* in which they should be observed ; and that order, being of divine appointment, is, in our opinion, as imperative as the duties themselves.

*M.* But Mr. Hall contends that sincere and conscientious *Pedobaptists*, whose mistake is involuntary, are entitled to a participation of the privileges of church-fellowship.

*S.* And here again we are agreed. Most assuredly, *on their own principles*, they are entitled to the privileges of church-fellowship. Sincerely believing they *have* entered the visible church in the way of divine appointment, their title to its peculiar privileges inevitably follows ; since every Christian is under a sacred obligation to recognize what *he sincerely believes* to be the divine will.

Unquestionably, it is the duty of every man to believe and obey *the truth* ; but then, it is equally evident, that every man must ascertain for himself what *is* truth, and what is duty ; and that which, after an impartial examination of the best evidence within his reach, he *believes* to be the truth, he is undoubtedly bound to obey. His belief may be erroneous ; but while it *is* his belief, his practice *must* correspond, or he will be convicted of living in the neglect of that which he believes to be a Christian duty. Whatever blame attaches to him, if any, is imputable, not to his practice, but to his belief, of which his practice is the necessary result ; and his belief, if erroneous, is criminal or innocent, in proportion as it is voluntary or involuntary. But they who honestly believe after an impartial examination of the best evidence, that they *have* received *Christian* baptism—that they *have* entered the visible church in the way of divine appointment—are undoubtedly entitled to a participation of its peculiar privileges.

*M.* And yet you would not *unite* with these sincere and conscientious Pedobaptists, in the duties and privileges of church-fellowship !

*S.* Would you, my friend, *unite* with them, in the ceremony which they believe to be Christian baptism ?

*M.* Certainly not.

*S.* And yet we think they are justly entitled to baptize without a profession of faith, as to partake of the Lord's supper prior to their reception of Christian baptism. They have, in our opinion,



no *scriptural* authority for either. In both cases they act on their own belief, and on their own responsibility ; consequently, *on their own principles*, they do right in partaking of the Lord's supper, though in our opinion unbaptized—their conviction, and not ours, being their proper directory. But, in neither case, may the dictates of *their* consciences be the directory of *my* actions ; *these* must be regulated by the dictates of *my* conscience : and it is no more a consequence, that, because, on their own principles, *they are entitled* to the Lord's supper, therefore it is *my duty to unite with them* in that ordinance, than that, because, on their own principles, *they are entitled* to baptize their infants, therefore it is *your duty to unite with them* in that ceremony. Their privilege and our duty, are not, in either case, necessarily identified. And if Mr. Hall has proved no more than he proposes to prove, *viz.* That all Christians are *entitled* to the privileges of church-fellowship ; so far as his ultimate object is concerned, he might just as well have done nothing. His ultimate position is, that it is *our duty to unite* with Pedobaptists in church-fellowship ; but all he even proposes to establish, in his last publication, is *their title* to the eucharist. But who does not perceive the difference between these two propositions ? and that proof of the latter falls short of establishing the former ? Suppose *their title* to the privileges of the Christian church were established by arguments the most numerous and conclusive—what then ? what is accomplished ? what is produced ? A fine chain of reasoning, complete in itself, perhaps ; but, for the pur-

pose for which it was wrought, *utterly useless*—dangling in the hand, and falling to the ground, just for want of a single link, to unite the last in the chain with the ultimate position—a connecting argument, that shall clearly prove that the privilege of the Pedobaptist and the duty of the Baptist are inseparable.

*M.* But in a joint participation of the eucharist, you would unite in an ordinance concerning which you are *agreed*, and in which both act conscientiously, each believing himself to be baptized.

*S.* But not each believing that the other is baptized. Our Pedobaptist brethren would act consistently throughout: acknowledging our baptism equally with their own, they would not make the slightest sacrifice of principle; and this will account for their uniform willingness to unite with us. With a few modern exceptions, *they* could not, any more than the Strict Baptists, unite in church fellowship with any whom *they* thought unbaptized; and their desire that their Baptist brethren should unite with them at the Lord's table, arises, generally, not from a conviction that baptism is not essential to church fellowship, but from a wish that we should acknowledge them as baptized—an acknowledgment which even *you*, in the plenitude of your candor, are not prepared to concede. But while our Pedobaptist brethren believe that we are baptized, and while we believe, with Mr. Hall, that their baptism is a "nullity," we meet on unequal ground; and though they would act consistently throughout, I should unquestionably deviate from the principle avowed by us both

—*that baptism is essential to church fellowship.\**  
 In a participation of the Lord's supper with Pedobaptists, there are two acts, both of which, being my own acts, must be regulated by my own principles: 1. Receiving the ordinance: 2. Uniting with unbaptized persons in receiving it. For the first of these, I have scriptural authority: for the last, I have none; such a union being a direct inversion of the order confessedly universal in the purest age of the church: an order, in my humble opinion, not incidental, not circumstantial, not local, not temporary and evanescent; but intentionally prescribed by the Christian Legislator, in his last commission to his apostles; the observance of which, therefore, is as imperative, and the obligation as perpetual, as the celebration of the ordinances themselves, and the obligation to preach the gospel to every creature. If this view of the

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\* Dr. Dwight, in his *System of Theology* (in agreement with the learned Dr. Doddridge,) maintains the principle in question, in the most unqualified terms.—  
 “*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*” To be born of water, is to be baptized. To be born of the Spirit, is to be regenerated. ‘The kingdom of God,’ is a phrase used, in the gospel, in a two-fold sense, and denotes his *visible*, and his *invisible* kingdom; or the collection of *apparent*, and the collection of *real* saints. The indispensable condition of entering the former, or visible kingdom, is here made, by our Saviour, baptism. The indispensable qualification for admission into the invisible kingdom, is regeneration—the great act of the Spirit of God, which constitutes men real saints.—Baptism, therefore, is here made, by Christ, a condition absolutely necessary to our authorized entrance into his visible church.” *Serm.* 156.

subject be correct, then the only question is—Is infant sprinkling Christian baptism? In *our* opinion it is not: consequently, in *our* opinion our Pedobaptist brethren have not complied with that ordinance, which, in the Christian commission, is enjoined on every disciple, immediately on his believing the gospel, and prior to his observance of *all* the things which Christ has commanded. ‘But our Pedobaptist brethren believe they *have* complied with the prior obligation.’ True; and *their* duty is plain. But this is not the question. The question is—What is *our* duty? And the answer is obvious—If it is incumbent on *them* to act upon *their* belief, it cannot be less incumbent on *us* to act upon *our* belief, both as to what *is* Christian baptism, and what is its relative situation in the Christian commission; and this, not only in relation to our individual practice, but likewise in the constitution of our particular churches. If, however, you contend that baptism does *not* occupy that place in the Christian commission which we have assigned it, we shall feel obliged by your pointing out what place it *does* occupy. Or, if compelled to admit that this *is* its relative situation, you yet maintain that this order is *not obligatory*, then we should be glad to be informed what part of the Christian commission *is* of perpetual obligation, and which part is discretionary—and *why* the order is imperative in relation to faith and baptism, and not equally imperative in relation to baptism and church fellowship. Who or what, my dear friend, has authorized a Christian practically to declare, in relation to the order of his Lord’s commission—‘*Hitherto will I come, but no further?*’

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*M.* I perceive, my friend, we shall not agree to-night: but, if you have no objection, as the controversy is agitated, and may become a *practical* question in the church of which we are members, we will resume the discussion on some future occasion. Perhaps, a few friendly conversations may place the subject in a clearer light; and few things would give me greater pleasure, than to convince you that your sentiments, on this question, are decidedly erroneous. For, sincerely as I esteem you, I cannot but think you have embraced a most unlovely and repulsive system. On the contrary, the practice for which we plead, commends itself so forcibly to *the feelings* of a Christian, that, to me, it is perfectly astonishing, that any man, with the least pretension to Christianity, should hesitate to adopt it. It is a *lovely* system!

*S.* But is it, I would ask, a *scriptural* system? That is the question. I confess I am not quite prepared to admit that every thing a Christian *feels* to be lovely and right *is* right. On this principle there is no certain standard of truth, to which inquirers can appeal. On the contrary, truth and error, will-worship and Christian obedience, would, in different circumstances, present equal claims; different Christians feeling differently, and the feelings of the same persons, at different times being diametrically opposed. But the truth is established on a rock, and remains perfectly unmoved by the fluctuating tides of feeling. The affections of a Christian are so intermingled with the affections of his nature, and both are so strangely influenced by extraneous and contingent

circumstances, that to build any part of the Christian fabric on *feeling*, is a folly not surpassed by the man who should attempt to rear an edifice on a sand-bank on the margin of the restless ocean. The habitual feeling of a Christian, indeed, under certain circumstances, and in certain situations, may be received as an additional sanction of that which habitually commends itself to an enlightened judgment: but, unless both the feeling and the judgment agree with the mind of Christ, they are both erroneous. Whatever place is assignable to feeling, in the regulation of Christian action, it must be confessed to be much too uncertain and wavering to be the *mainspring* of Christian obedience. Instead of the judgment being controlled by the feeling, the feeling should be subject to the judgment; and both should hear the voice and obey the dictates of the immutable oracles of divine truth.

*M.* But surely that system cannot be scriptural, which is totally opposed to the *genius of the gospel*. "The genius of the gospel, let it be remembered, is not ceremonial, but spiritual; consisting, not in meats or drink, or outward observances, but in the cultivation of such interior graces as compose the essence of virtue, perfect the character, and purify the heart. These form the soul of religion; all the rest are but her terrestrial attire, which she will lay aside when she passes the threshold of eternity. When, therefore, the obligations of humility and love come into competition with a punctual observance of external rites, the genius of religion will easily determine to



which we should incline.”—[*Terms*, 190, 191. *H.* 107.\*]

S. So then, the adherence of Christian churches to the order of their Lord's commission, is opposed to the genius of the gospel! Who would have thought it! But if so, by all means, let the commission be cancelled; and evermore let us banish from our minds the antiquated notion, that obedience to the Christian commands, so far from being *opposed* to the genius of the gospel is *the very criterion*, not only of love to the Saviour, but likewise of *love to the brethren*—principles, let it be remembered, which constitute the very essence of the genius of the gospel. It is very true, indeed, that our Lord required of his disciples this proof of their affection; “If ye love me,” said he, “*keep my commandments.*”—“Ye are my friends, if ye do *whatsoever* I command you.” And it is equally true, that the beloved and affectionate John never entertained the least apprehension that Christian obedience was incompatible with love to the brethren; “For,” said he, “by this we know that we love the *children* of God, when we love God, and *keep his commandments.* For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.” But what then? All this was a long time ago, and, *at that time*, perfectly in harmony with the genius of the gospel: but since then, it seems, the circumstances of the Christian church are changed: *now*, there-

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\* H, with the succeeding figures, denotes the page of Mr. Hall's complete works, as published in America.

fore, an adherence, in the constitution of our churches, to the order of our Lord's commission, in relation to the gospel ordinances, is *opposed* to the genius of the gospel! Astonishing! *But is it so?* Let us examine. And allow me to inquire, in the first place, Who authorized the assertion, that "the genius of the gospel is not ceremonial, but spiritual; consisting, not in outward observances, but in the cultivation of such interior graces as compose the essence of virtue, perfect the character, and purify the heart?" That the genius of the gospel is *spiritual*, is universally admitted; but that it is *exclusively* spiritual, none, it might be presumed, but those who deny the perpetuity of the Christian ordinances *in toto*, will venture deliberately to affirm. It will not avail, to remind us of the words of an Apostle—that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink;" because the application of this expression to either of the solemn and affecting rites peculiar to the gospel dispensation, is a manifest perversion of the Apostle's *meaning*; the meats and drinks to which he referred, being placed in *direct contrast* with the "righteousness" pertaining to the kingdom of God, of which we have the very highest authority for asserting that baptism is a part: "Thus it becometh us, to fulfil all *righteousness*." Besides, such an affirmation is equally opposed to the allowed and systematic practice of our opponents themselves. *Their* religion, however spiritual, is partly ceremonial. Do they not habitually partake of the symbols of the Redeemer's death? Have they not submitted even to the despised and un-

dervalued ordinance of Christian baptism? And what are these, but *ceremonies*—the solemn and significant ceremonies of the *gospel* dispensation? Were the position advanced by a *Friend*, (or Quaker,) however erroneous it might be, it would at least be intelligible and consistent; but, for a *Baptist* to maintain that the genius of the gospel is not in part *ceremonial*, is to pass a sweeping condemnation on his own acknowledged practice. But you tell us that “the interior graces form the soul of religion,” and that “all the rest are but her terrestrial attire, which she will lay aside when she passes the threshold of eternity.” Now, my friend, this beautiful description may be very just: but what then? It is perfectly inapplicable to the present controversy. For it so happens, that we are, at present—and all Christian communities, as such, must necessarily continue to exist—on *this side* the threshold of eternity. Our *present* duty, therefore, as Christians, and as Christian communities, is, not to “*lay aside* the terrestrial attire of religion,” but rather to “*put on* the Lord Jesus,” in the way of his own appointment; and in all respects to adapt our practice to the requirements of the Christian Legislator, in the present probationary state. “*Until he come*,” we have no right to “*lay aside*” the terrestrial attire of religion; but are required to conform to the regulations of our Lord’s house, in a punctilious attention to those outward rites, which, for wise purposes, he has enjoined, no less than in the cultivation of those duties which are essentially spiritual. The graces of the Spirit were never in-

tended to *supersede* obedience to the ritual precepts. If, indeed, ritual obedience were necessarily *subversive* of spiritual religion, or if a punctual observance of the former involved the *neglect* of the latter, there might be some justice in your observation; at present, there is none; since, whatever degree of importance is attached to each, they are equally imperative—both having emanated from the same Supreme Legislator. He who commanded his disciples to *love one another*, also commissioned his apostles to “teach all nations, *baptizing* them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:” and this, *before* they taught them to observe *all* things that he had commanded them. Instead, therefore, of appealing to the genius of religion, to “determine to *which* we shall incline,” we should recognize the spirit of our Lord’s admonition on another occasion: “*These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*”

M. But—(further to adopt the language of our eloquent friend,)—“Strict communion sets the conduct and the feelings at variance; and erects into a duty, the mortification of our best and holiest propensities.”—[*Reasons*, 17, 18, H. 290.]

S. That I cannot allow. Our *best* and *holiest* propensities are, undoubtedly, those which induce a rigid adherence to the commands of the Christian Legislator, in preference to a union, even with Christians, in what we believe to be a deviation from his revealed will. Whether a permanent union with unbaptized Christians, in church

fellowship, or occasional communion with them, in a single ordinance peculiar to that relation,\* be a deviation from the mind of Christ, is a question for consideration: but if it *be*, or if a Christian *believe* that it is, the corresponding practice of strict communion is, not a *mortification*, but an *exemplification* of the best and holiest propensities.

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\* There are some Christians who are unwilling to receive pious Pedobaptists into *full church fellowship*, but who have no objection to what is called, *occasional communion*, or even to *habitual communion*, provided it extend no farther than the celebration of the *Lord's supper*. But is not this admitting them to the greater privilege, and denying them the less? Surely we ought not to be more tenacious of the exclusive privileges of church membership, than of exact obedience to our Lord's instructions, contained in his last commission. But from these instructions, occasional communion at the Lord's table, with unbaptized persons, is, in the writer's opinion, an occasional deviation—and habitual communion, habitual deviation. And the only plausible objection—indeed, the only objection that can be urged against full church membership, after such an innovation on the order of the Christian commission, is, that it is *inexpedient*. A Christian who practises mixed communion in a participation of a church ordinance with Pedobaptists, cannot object to receiving them to full church membership, on any other ground than alarm lest his privileges as a Baptist should be endangered! But is this Christian allegiance? Is it not a symptom that we are more jealous for the privileges of church membership, than for the honor of Christ? Surely, those who, either under the influence of feeling, or from motives of convenience, have been induced to deviate from the order of their Lord's commission, by a union with unbaptized persons in a church ordinance, while, at the same time, they refuse to admit them to church membership, will seriously reflect, whether they are not laying greater

*M.* But you practise a *worse* mixed communion than that against which you inveigh; retaining in your churches, members of whose *morality* the most charitable are compelled to doubt.

*S.* True, my friend, we do. But, permit me to ask, Have we any *rule*, that immorality shall be no bar to communion? Do we systematically

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stress on *expediency* than on *principle*. If communion in a church ordinance with unbaptized persons be a deviation from the order of the Christian commission, as illustrated by the uniform example, and enjoined by the concurrent authority of the Apostles, it is a weightier consideration than expediency, and ought to be more influential. Even that which is lawful, *may* not be expedient: but that which is unlawful, *cannot* be expedient—either totally or partially, habitually or occasionally. The preservation of the exclusive right of suffrage in a Baptist church, is not worth a thought, in comparison with a strict adherence to the law of Christ. If mixed communion in a church ordinance were not a deviation from the mind of Christ, who are we, that we should presume to hold up a finger to prevent the full recognition of pious Pedobaptists as members of our churches? The perpetuity of the Baptist denomination, as such, shrivels into perfect insignificance, upon any other consideration than this—**IT IS THE ONLY DENOMINATION IN THE WORLD, IN WHICH THE ORDINANCES OF JESUS CHRIST ARE KEPT AS THEY WERE DELIVERED.** This is the reason, and perhaps the only justifiable reason, for a separation from such of our brethren as do not impose upon *us* the observance of their unscriptural rites and ceremonies. But in proportion as this consideration is received into the mind, and maintains its proper influence, we shall practise strict communion in our churches—not simply from expediency, but from principle; not merely in defence of our supposed privileges, but from a profound regard for the honor of Christ; not partially, but uniformly.

agree to tolerate it? Is this a part of our constitution? Do we tell our members, or candidates for membership, that though in our humble opinion, all Christians *should be* moral characters, and especially if they sincerely *believe* that morality is a duty; still, while they are of opinion either that they *are* moral, or that they are “*not under the law*,” as a rule of life, the absence of morality is no bar to communion? True, we do retain improper characters in our churches; and so do you: but why? Why, simply because of the difficulty of *proving* their immorality; without which, on what principle of justice, I should be glad to know, could they be expelled? If we maintained, that *known* and *acknowledged* immorality were no disqualification, there would be some pertinence in the remark: but surely, there is a wide difference between bearing with individuals even in things which are evil, where that evil is very difficult of detection—and making *a rule* to tolerate evil. As the late Mr. Fuller observes—“It was no reproach to Christ and his Apostles, to have a Judas among them, though he was a thief, so long as his theft was not manifest: but had there been *a rule* laid down, that covetousness and even theft should be *no bar to communion*, the reproach had been indelible.”—[*Letter to a Friend*, 27.]

*M.* But some whom you reject are better Christians than some whom you *welcome* to your communion.

*S.* It may be so; and at *my own* table, I should prefer their company; but in receiving Christians to *the Lord's* table, we must recognize *his* authority. As the subject relates to the church

militant, perhaps you will allow me a military illustration. An officer beats up for recruits, to resist a foreign invasion. A fine young man offers his services. He is taller, by head and shoulders, than some who have been enlisted. The officer surveys him, and thinks he has obtained a prize. He welcomes him to His Majesty's service, and proceeds, on the first convenient opportunity, to administer *the oath of allegiance*. The young man says, 'No: I cannot take the oath: It is now unnecessary, for it was administered to me many years ago, in my very infancy.' This does not satisfy the officer. As he is *instructed* to have the oath administered, and the young man declines to take it, the officer promptly replies, '*then I cannot receive you.*' Your scruples may be conscientious ones: I presume they are; and you may be a loyal man, and might make a very good soldier; and if the King, my master, were here, and were to intimate that in this instance I *might* deviate from my instructions, *then* I would receive you with all my heart. But here is the Royal Commission: read it if you will; and you will find that it runs thus—*Enlist all the young men in the district, ADMINISTERING TO THEM THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE, and send them to the regiment to be further instructed.* Now, can any thing be plainer than this? more explicit, or more preremptory? What can I do? I am "a man under authority:" it is at my peril to deviate from my instructions—I CANNOT RECEIVE YOU. And if you were to go to the regiment, and propose to join their ranks *only for a single day,\** if they believed you had not taken

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\* Occasional Communion.—See Note, p. 40.



the oath of allegiance, they would not admit you. In vain would you plead your *loyalty*, or that in *other* services they did not require the oath. They would reply, to a man,—‘ We do not dispute either of these points : but THE KING’S REGIMENTS MUST BE FORMED AND REGULATED BY THE KING’S INSTRUCTIONS. The oath of allegiance always *has been*, and (until the King himself *annul* his Royal Commission) always *must be*, the term of admission into the King’s regiments. Your scruples may be conscientious, and therefore may justify *you* ; but we are not to deviate from our instructions in deference to your scruples : that would be honoring your scruples more than his Majesty’s orders. Our laws are explicit and preremptory : WE CANNOT RECEIVE YOU INTO THE REGIMENT. But engage in any service for which the oath is *not* required, and we will, according to the best of our ability, unite with you in it, and cordially wish you success in the King’s name. And when the war is over, and the army is disbanded, we will unite with each other as loyal subjects, who have served his Majesty, each agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience, all of whom, therefore, may cordially unite in the celebration of his triumphs.” Now, my friend, I think you cannot fail to discover the *principle* on which we act—a principle in which no candid mind will perceive, and in which I challenge the most uncandid and talented mind to discover, one single iota of that odious and bitter feeling, so freely alleged against us, called *bigotry* ! We admit that our Pedobaptist friends are Christians ; and, as such, we

unite with them in every Christian exercise for which we believe baptism is not a prerequisite. We give them credit for sincerity and conscientiousness : but still, in our opinion, infant sprinkling is not Christian baptism, and Christian baptism is the only *appointed* and *authorized* mode of entrance into the visible church. While, therefore, we unite with them in those exercises which were duties before baptism was instituted, and which would have been duties to the end of time had there been no Christian churches, we contend, that THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST MUST BE CONSTITUTED AGREEABLY TO THE LAW OF CHRIST; and that, in no case may a conscientious deviation from the Christian law, be considered equivalent to Christian obedience.

M. Still, the question occurs—*Is the admission of unbaptized persons to the eucharist, a deviation from the law of Christ?*

S. Why, my friend, you yourself acknowledge that baptism *was* a term of admission into the visible church,\* and the inevitable conclusion is, either that the law which made it was not of perpetual obligation, or, that baptism *still is* a term of communion. If the law be *not* of perpetual obligation, where is *your* authority for restricting baptism to believers? If it *be* of perpetual obligation, that is *our* authority for receiving to the privileges of church fellowship, only baptized believers. Take which ground you please, my friend ; but, to be consistent, either attach yourself to the

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\* Mr. Hall believes it was “ essential to salvation.”—*[Reply, 43. H. 173.]*

Pedobaptists, or come over to us ; your present position appearing to me, perfectly untenable. But, not to pursue the inquiry now, I will with pleasure accept your proposal to resume the discussion in a few friendly conversations ; and perhaps it will be convenient to make an early appointment.

*M.* Any day you please next week ; as early in the week as may be convenient to yourself. And, as Mr. Hall is, unquestionably the best writer on our side of the controversy, and as my views exactly coincide with his, I shall take the liberty, occasionally at least, perhaps generally, to quote from his publications. I presume you have no objection.

*S.* None whatever. What shall be the subject of our next conversation ?

*M.* Unless you are disposed to abandon an argument usually maintained by the advocates of strict communion—the *supposed identity of John's baptism with Christian baptism*—that, probably, would form the most appropriate commencement.

*S.* Certainly, I am not prepared to yield the point ; though it does not appear, to me, to be of much consequence. But, as Mr. Hall considers it “demonstrable,” that they were two distinct institutes, and, consequently, that the Lord's supper was celebrated prior to the institution of Christian baptism, this part of the controversy may engage our attention on Monday evening.

## CONVERSATION II.

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BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER ANTERIOR, AND  
SUBSEQUENT TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST, CIR-  
CUMSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT, BUT ESSENTIALLY  
THE SAME.

## ANALYSIS.

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A difference, but not an essential difference, between the ordinance of baptism anterior and subsequent to the death of Christ. Also a difference in many particulars corresponding, between the Lord's supper before and after that interesting event. The epithets applied to John's baptism, and the absence of any distinctive appellation in connection with the Christian ordinance, in favor of our hypothesis. John's baptism not contrasted with water baptism after the Pentecost. The effusion of spiritual gifts did not invariably accompany the latter. If these preternatural gifts were an essential appendage to the Christian ordinance, and none but the Apostles had the power of conferring them, the Ethiopian eunuch, and probably many others, even in the Apostolic age, did not receive Christian baptism! On this principle, our baptism also unchristianized! The name of Jesus. Miracles in the name of Messiah contemporary with John's baptism. The requirements from John's converts, and from the disciples at the first celebration of the Lord's supper, both future. The spiritual import of both ordinances equally obscure, until illustrated by our Lord's death. That the Christian dispensation commenced with the ministry of John, asserted by the Evangelist Mark, and confirmed by the literal and figurative representations of our Lord himself. John's baptism not unchristianized because he received his commission from the Father. Such a supposition would divest of their Christian character, the doctrine, the works, and the precepts of Jesus himself. The baptisms administered by Christ's disciples, during his personal ministry, must have emanated from his authority; and, being peculiar to the Christian dispensation, must have been Christian baptism. But Mr. Hall maintains that these baptisms "in no respect differed from John's." The two baptisms, therefore, on Mr. Hall's own showing, not "essentially different," but identically the same! Certainly, the Messiah was not John's assistant! Of the three thousand at the Pentecost. The twelve disciples at Ephesus. Atter all, our principal argument for the priority of baptism to a joint participation of a church ordinance, derived from our Lord's commission. Connection of baptism and church fellowship.

## CONVERSATION II.

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*M.* My dear friend, I am glad to see you. I hope, since our last interview, you have carefully weighed the arguments adduced to prove "*the essential difference*" between John's baptism, and the baptism practised after our Lord's decease: because, "if it should clearly appear that these were two distinct institutes, it will be evident that the eucharist was appointed and celebrated before Christian baptism existed."—[*Terms*, 14, 15. *H.* 29.]—That they were separate institutions, is, in my opinion, "demonstrable."—[*Reasons*, 21. *H.* 292.]

*S.* Doubtless, my friend, there was a *difference* between them; but I cannot perceive an "*essential difference*," or such a difference as shall constitute them "two distinct institutes." But then, there was also a difference between the *Lord's supper*, as celebrated before and after the death of Christ—a difference, in many respects, corresponding with that which existed between the ordinance of baptism before and after that interesting event. Consequently, they agree with each other; and we might spare ourselves the fatigue of disputing a point which, after all, does not materially affect the main argument; and proceed at once

to the consideration of THE COMMISSION which our Lord gave to his disciples after his resurrection; and which, in my humble opinion, whatever may be the result of the present inquiry, is THE LAW to which all Christians must appeal, and by which, as explained by the uniform practice of the apostles, the question must be decided.

*M.* I am of opinion, certainly, that "the connexion of this question with the point in debate, is casual and incidental, rather than real and intrinsic; since the only possible advantage to the cause of mixed communion resulting from its decision, is the overthrow of an argument most feebly constructed. To be convinced of this, it is only necessary to remember that the admission of what you contend for, would merely prove that the ordinance of baptism was promulgated at an *earlier period* than the Lord's supper. But in determining a question of duty resulting from positive laws, the era of their promulgation is a consideration totally foreign."—[*Ess. Diff.* 6, 7. *H.* 115.]

*S.* Without conceding that the admission of *your* opinion would be of the least service to you, since, whatever be the nature of John's baptism, both the ordinances are involved in the same predicament; still, perhaps, a patient examination of the question may be more satisfactory, than for either party to assert that his own sentiment is "demonstrable." Wherein do you suppose the points of difference consist?

*M.* There are, in my opinion, several. I may instance, in the first place, that "the rite performed by John, is rarely, if ever, introduced

without some explanatory phrase, or epithet. It is sometimes denominated the baptism of John ; on other occasions, baptism in water ; and the baptism of repentance : but it is never expressed in the absolute form in which the mention of Christian baptism invariably occurs. Though innumerable persons were baptized by St. Paul, we read of no such expression as the baptism of Paul. On the contrary, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, he expresses a sort of pious horror at the very idea of such a supposition. Whoever considers the extreme precision which the inspired historians maintain in the choice of the terms employed to represent religious ordinances, will perceive this circumstance to possess considerable weight.”—[*Ess. Diff.* 10. H. 117.]

S. Innumerable persons baptized by St. Paul ! When ? Where ? Who ? Really, my friend, if you had not so pointedly referred to one of Paul’s Epistles, I should have thought you meant Peter. But passing this, the reason of the epithet, “the baptism of John,” I humbly conceive to be, because it was the baptism which John *introduced*. It was a *new* rite ; and that a new institution should be designated by certain descriptive epithets, is perfectly natural : consequently, as baptism in water subsequent to the Pentecost, has, appended to it, no epithet by which it is distinguished from the former—in fact, no marked designation whatever—the fair inference is, that, so far from being a “distinct institute,” it is, with whatever circumstantial difference, essentially a continuation of the rite introduced by John. Thus, the “extreme



precision of the inspired historians, is in favour of *our* hypothesis rather than of yours.

*M.* But you seem to have forgotten, my friend, that "John himself contrasts his baptism with a superior one, which he directs his hearers to expect at the hand of the Messiah. 'I indeed (said he) baptize you in water; but there standeth one among you, whose shoe-latchets I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and in fire;' referring, unquestionably, to that redundance of prophetic and miraculous gifts, which were bestowed on the church after the effusion of the Spirit."—[*Ess. Diff.* 11. *H.* 118.]

*S.* Undoubtedly, my friend, John contrasted his baptism with the baptism of *the Spirit*. But what then? Who ever confounded them? Even *Christian* baptism is distinguished from *that*—the one being denominated *water* baptism; the other, the baptism of *the Spirit*.

*M.* Nay, but the question is, "whether John, in foretelling that the Messiah should baptize with the Holy Ghost, intended to allude to the sacramental water, or whether his attention was directed solely to the effusion of the Spirit, without reference to the external rite."—[*Ess. Diff.* 49, 50. *H.* 135.]

*S.* But John does not so much as *mention* water in connexion with the baptism of the Spirit.

*M.* True; and "his suppression of the mention of *water*, is in perfect accordance with the genius of oriental speech, which, in the exhibition of a complex object, is wont to represent it only by its boldest and most impressive feature."—[*Ess. Diff.* 50. *H.* 135.]

S. But the effusion of spiritual gifts did not *invariably accompany* baptism.

M. Nor is this necessary. "It is quite sufficient to account for the language of John, as well as to sustain the inference deduced from it, that such was the *stated* order.—[*Ess. Diff.* 50. *H.* 136.]

S. That the preternatural gifts of the Spirit, by the laying on of hands, were, at one period of the church, the usual appendage of baptism, (as they also were, during the same period, of other Christian ceremonies,) is unquestionable ; but the simple circumstance of there having been *deviations* from the rule, clearly shows that the baptism of the Spirit was not a constituent part of the ordinance enjoined by Christ, but something perfectly distinct. How do you account for the baptism of the Samaritans, recorded in the 8th chapter of the Acts, being unaccompanied by the miraculous gift of the Spirit ?

M. "Because the apostles, to whom alone the power of conferring it belonged, were not present."—[*Ess. Diff.* 51. *H.* 136.]

S. But if the presence of the apostles was necessary to the communication of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, one of two consequences is inevitable : Either, (1.) These preternatural gifts did not form a constituent part, or even an essential appendage, of the ordinance enjoined by Christ : Or, (2.) The Samaritans, the Ethiopian eunuch, (whose confession, surely, was Christian,) and probably multitudes besides, who were baptized subsequent to the Pentecost, did not receive Christian baptism ! For who will pretend that the apostles were present on *all* occasions of baptism ?

And if the absence of this glorious appendage establish an essential difference between *John's* and Christian baptism, then *our* baptism also will be unchristianized: and the alarming result will be, that there is not an individual in all Christendom, from the meanest member of the least of the "little Baptist churches," to the most elevated of our "public teachers," who has received Christian baptism! Surely, my friend, for once you will yield to circumstances, and permit fact and common sense to triumph over theory.

*M.* But I have other reasons in support of my theory, which must be disposed of, before it is abandoned. "It is universally admitted, that Christian baptism has invariably been administered in the name of Jesus, and that circumstance is essential to its validity; while it is evident, from the solicitude with which our Saviour avoided the avowal of himself as the Messiah, that during his public ministry, his name was not publicly employed as the object of a religious rite. The practice of baptizing in his name must have been equivalent, at least, to a public confession of his being the Messiah. The historian informs us, that while John was baptizing, all men were musing in their hearts whether *he* were the Christ or not. —But how is it possible, let me ask, that such a question should arise amongst the people, on your hypothesis? or how could it enter into their imagination to infer, from his baptizing in the name of Jesus, that he himself was, or that he pretended to be, the Messiah?"—[*Ess. Diff.* 12—14. *H.* 18, 19.]

S. These difficulties, supposed to be so formidable, admit, I humbly conceive, of a very easy solution. I believe it is *not* universally admitted that Christian baptism has been invariably administered *verbally* in the name of *Jesus*; but in connection with the Father and the Spirit, in the name of *the Son*. Thus, it is not pretended that John's baptism was administered *verbally* in the name of *Jesus*, but in the name of *Messias*, or *the Christ*: and this apparently trivial distinction, while it furnishes an obvious *reason* for the cogitations and inquiries of the people concerning John—"whether he were the Christ or not"—is all that is necessary to expose the fallacy of your argument. John, and after him the disciples of Jesus, might have baptized the whole Jewish nation in the name of *Messias*, or *the Christ*, not informing them, at the same time, that *Jesus* was the Christ; without, in a single instance, counteracting the caution and solicitude which Jesus confessedly manifested, to avoid an indiscriminate verbal avowal of that interesting fact. I would observe further, it is undeniable that during his personal ministry, our Lord commissioned not only the twelve apostles, but the seventy disciples also, to perform *in his name*, acts at least equally calculated to excite attention, and to give publicity to whatever the action revealed, with *baptizing* in his name. They were to preach the gospel, heal the sick, work miracles, and cast out devils; and, having fulfilled their mission, they returned, exulting, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us, *through thy name*." Now, my friend, on your hypothesis,—that a public act in the name of Jesus must have

been at least equivalent to a public confession that Jesus was the Messiah,—what a dangerous experiment was this! how inconsistent with that caution which our Lord uniformly observed! here was publicity! here was exposure of a profound secret! how widely and rapidly would *this* blazon abroad the news that Jesus was the Messiah! For surely these miracles, these exorcisms in our Lord's name, must have attracted equal, probably more attention, than the administration of baptism *in his name*.\* The simple truth appears to be, that though our Lord studiously avoided an *indiscriminate, verbal* declaration that he was the Christ, he never shrunk from *such* an avowal of his Messiahship as might be inferred from his works. “*The works that I do* (comprehending, of course,

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the works performed by his disciples in his name,) *bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.*"

*M.* But "if St. Paul's citation of the language of John, in the 19th of the Acts, be correct, what he said to the people was this: 'That they *should* believe on him who is to come.' The epithet, '*ὁ ἐρχόμενος* *he who is coming*,' it is generally admitted, was the usual appellation applied to the Messiah at that period; which, while it expresses the certainty and near approach of the event of his coming, intimates not less clearly its *futurity*. The language which the forerunner held was precise and appropriate: it was not a demand of present faith in any known individual, but was limited to a *future* faith on a certain personage, who was about to evince his title to the character he assumed, by his personal appearance and miracles. He said to the people that they *should* believe in him that was to come. Could the same person, let me ask, at the same moment, be described by terms expressive of the present and of the future tense—at once as an existing individual, a person historically known, and as one that was to come?"—[*Ess. Diff.* 14, 15. *H.* 119.]

*S.* And what then? Admitting the correctness of all you have advanced, it would avail you nothing; since *the Lord's supper*, as celebrated anterior to the death of Christ, is involved in the same predicament. If this kind of argument establish an essential difference between *baptism*, as administered before and after the death of Christ, it must also establish a difference equally essen-

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tial, between *the Lord's supper*, as celebrated anterior and subsequent to that interesting event. In the first instance, like baptism, it was *prospective*: it was required of its recipients that they *should*, at some *future* time, thus commemorate the melting transaction which was yet *future*. In the latter instance, it was *retrospective*—a *commemoration* of an event which had actually transpired.

*M.* But “the spiritual import of Christian baptism, as asserted by St. Paul, transcends incomparably the measure of religious knowledge possessed during the ministry of John. ‘Know ye not (is his appeal to Christians,) that so many of you as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?’—What is the meaning of the words, *baptized into his death*? Whatever else it may comprehend, it unquestionably means the being baptized into a belief of his death. But at the time that John was fulfilling his course, this belief was so far from possessing the minds of his converts, that even the apostles were not only ignorant of that event, but impatient of its mention. ‘As many of us,’ says St. Paul, ‘as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death;’ which is surely equivalent to affirming that whoever were not baptized into his death, were not baptized into Christ. But the disciples of John were not baptized into (the belief of) his death. Therefore they were not baptized into Christ.”—[*Ess. Diff.* 15—17. *H.* 120.]

*S.* This argument also, my friend, like the last, would, if it were valid, apply with equal force to the *Lord's supper*, as celebrated before and after the death of Christ. It is not only a

contradiction in terms, to say that the apostles *commemorated* an event before it occurred ; but the 'spiritual import' of the Lord's supper, as asserted by the apostle Paul, exceeds the measure of religious apprehension which possessed the minds of its recipients at its first celebration. "As often," says Paul, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death." What is meant by the phrase, *showing the Lord's death*? Whatever else it comprehends, it unquestionably includes the belief of his death. But at the first celebration of the sacred supper, this belief was so far from possessing the minds of the apostles, that it was a mystery they could not unravel ; and even subsequently, the death of their Lord was most abhorrent from their minds. When Jesus was apprehended, we find the very prince of the apostles engaged in active combat, to *prevent* that identical tragedy, the commemoration of which is the express design of the Lord's supper. "As often," says Paul, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death ;" which, adopting your own mode of reasoning, is surely equivalent to saying, that those who did not thus show the Lord's death, did not partake of the Lord's supper ! But the apostles, at its first celebration, did not thus show (their belief of) the Lord's death. Therefore, on your hypothesis, the apostles did not, at that time, partake of the Lord's supper ! The truth is, my friend, that *both* the ordinances, previous to the death of Christ, were necessarily *different*, (though, in my opinion, not "*essentially* different,") from what they were afterwards : the events which *each* recognize,

were future events; and the recipients of *both* were comparatively ignorant of the full import of the rite to which they attended. It was then only the twilight, the dawn of the gospel-day. The mists and shadows of the night had not entirely departed. Previous to the death of Christ, there was a dimness, a mystery, which obscured *every* event intended ultimately to illustrate and endear the death of Christ. The imperfections assignable to *baptism*, during this spiritual twilight, are also assignable to the first celebration of the *Lord's supper*. *Both* the ordinances are involved in similar obscurity; nor could the recipients of *either* discern the amazing transaction, to which *both*, at that period, pointed, as to a glory yet to be revealed. What then? Shall we consign them to the darkness of the preceding dispensation? Or, shall we not rather recognize them as containing the germ, the first elements, the incipient qualities, of the impressive and affecting ordinances, the import of which has been discovered and realized by the clear shining of the gospel-day? To *the argument*, it is immaterial; since, whatever be their destiny, the two ordinances, as celebrated anterior to the death of Christ, stand or fall together. But it is not a matter of absolute indifference. For, take away the ordinances as they existed during our Saviour's personal ministry, and, in teaching men to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded, how will you be able to discover and establish any duty, peculiar to church fellowship, which he *had* commanded?

*M.* But, "as the ministry of John commenced previously to that of the Messiah, which succeed-

ed his baptism, no rite, celebrated at that time, is entitled to a place amongst Christian sacraments, since they did not commence with the Christian dispensation, nor issue from the authority of Christ, as Head of the church.”—[*Ess. Diff.* 17. *H.* 120.]

S. Here are two distinct objections. Let us attend to each separately. First, you say, the ministry of John did not commence with the Christian dispensation. I think it did; or rather, that the Christian dispensation commenced with the ministry of John.

M. But that is impossible; for, “during our Lord’s residence on earth, until his resurrection, the kingdom of God is uniformly represented as future, though near at hand.”—[*Ess. Diff.* 18. *H.* 121.]

S. Not quite *uniformly*, my friend. On one occasion, you may remember, our Lord said, “If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God *is come* unto you.” And, on inquiry by the Pharisees, *when* the kingdom of God should come, he replied, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall men say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold the kingdom of God *is within* you.” Nor is it possible to evade the force of this argument, by distinguishing between our Lord’s personal ministry, and the ministry of John; since the Evangelist Mark expressly informs us, that the coming of *John* was in “the *beginning* of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” In addition to this, it is worthy of remark, as placing the matter beyond all contradiction, that, during John’s imprison-

ment, our Lord himself most unequivocally characterizes the ministry of the Baptist as the commencement of the gospel dispensation: "*From the days of John the Baptist until now, (said he,) the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,*" &c.—in allusion, doubtless, to the eagerness with which the common people received the doctrine propounded by John. The parabolical descriptions, also, of the Christian dispensation, are decidedly opposed to your hypothesis. The kingdom of God is compared to "*leaven, hid in three measures of meal;*" and this accords with fact. During our Lord's abode on earth, the gospel silently and gradually insinuated itself into the minds of the people. It is also compared to "*a grain of mustard seed.*" This also accords with fact. At first, the gospel of the kingdom grew underground, and put forth its shoots gradually and imperceptibly to those who were expecting some sudden and glaring display of the power of Messiah. Now, on the supposition that the kingdom of God, or "the gospel of Jesus Christ," commenced, as Mark says, with the ministry of John, there is a *fitness*, and *resemblance*—a *thorough good keeping*—between the comparison and the reality. While, on the contrary, if we could suppose with you, that the Christian dispensation commenced with the glories of Pentecost, nothing could *less* illustrate it than "*leaven hid in three measures of meal,*" and a single grain of "*the smallest of all seeds.*" Nor will it avail to reply, that, during our Lord's personal ministry, the kingdom of God is occasionally represented as future. This is admitted. But what then? Does it therefore follow that its

*commencement* was future? By no means. And to affirm this, would be just as conclusive, or rather inconclusive, as to affirm, that we have not to this day witnessed its approach, because in our daily aspirations to heaven, we are directed to say, *Thy kingdom come*. The result is, my friend, that, as the first streaks of light which shoot across the horizon, contain the incipient elements of day; so those glimmerings of the gospel, which characterized the ministry of John, and which became gradually brighter during the ministry of our Lord, were the *beginning*, the *early dawn*, and contained the essential properties of the overwhelming splendour of "the ministration of the Spirit."

M. But surely you will not pretend, that John's baptism issued from "the authority of Christ, as Head of the church."

S. I do not pretend, certainly, that John received his commission from Jesus in person. Undoubtedly, he received it of "*the Father*." But what then? Does *this* prove that his baptism was not a Christian institute? By no means. On the contrary, such a supposition is fraught with the most alarming consequences. On this principle, not only would the whole of John's mission be unchristianized—(the gospel which he preached, no less than the rite which he performed,)—but the gospel which *our Lord himself* preached, and the miracles which *he* performed, would be involved in a similar predicament. In support of this assertion, it is only necessary to inquire, From whom did our Lord receive his commission? By whom was he sent? And by what au-

thority did he uniformly act? Was he self-commissioned? self-sent? self-authorized?—Without intending, for a moment, to derogate from our Lord's essential divinity, we maintain, that, as the Messiah, his authority was precisely the same as that of the harbinger. This is strongly implied in that memorable interrogatory answer to the chief priests and elders, who came to him as he was teaching in the temple, and said, "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? Jesus answered, I will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: *The baptism of John—whence was it?*" evidently implying, that the answer to *this* question would be the appropriate reply to *theirs*. But, to place the matter beyond a doubt, we have only to refer to our Lord's discourses, recorded by the Evangelist John. "I am come in *my Father's* name, and ye receive me not."—"I do nothing of myself; but as *my Father* hath taught me, I speak these things."—"The works that I do in *my Father's* name, they bear witness of me."—"As *my Father* has sent me, so send I you." Now, on the hypothesis, that it is essential to a Christian ordinance, that it should have been instituted by Christ, in distinction from the Father, the works which Jesus himself performed are divested of their Christian character. The gospel which he preached, was not the *Christian* doctrine! the miracles which he wrought, were not *Christian* miracles! the commands which he issued, were not *Christian* commands! And yet, that the gospel which our Lord preached, *was*

the Christian doctrine ; that the miracles which he wrought, *were* Christian miracles ; and that the commands which he issued, *were* Christian commands, no one will presume, for a moment, to deny. Then why deny that John's baptism was a *Christian* institute, simply because he received his commission, not from Jesus in person, but from *the Father*?—But now, my friend, allow me to direct your attention to *other instances of baptism*, than those performed by John—baptisms, which *must* have emanated from the personal authority of Christ, and which were undeniably anterior to the institution of the sacred supper. In early life Jesus had been engaged “about his Father's business,” as a Prince during his minority, in privacy and seclusion ; but, when he was “about thirty years of age,” he assumed the legislative character, and took into his own hands the reins of government. His first legislative act, in person, we may presume, was a command to his disciples to teach and baptize ; for, on what other supposition can their performance of these services be explained ? The only question for our consideration is, Was the rite which they administered, *John's baptism* ? To *the argument*, it is immaterial ; for, if it was *not*, it must have been the commencement of a *new baptism*—an undeniably *Christian* baptism. But Mr. Hall, I remember, in his *Terms of Communion*, (p. 196. H. 109) tells us it *was*—“that the baptisms celebrated by Christ's disciples during his personal ministry, in no respect differed from John's, either in the action itself, or in the import, but were merely a joint-execution of the same work.” But then it



so happens, that not only did these baptisms, as we have seen, belong to the Christian dispensation, but they *must* have emanated from "the authority of Christ, as the Head of the Church," or we shall be presented with the appalling spectacle of self-appointed apostles, assuming a greater authority than their Sovereign Lord. These baptisms, then, belonging to the Christian dispensation, and being performed in obedience to the command of the Christian Legislator, were, undeniably, *Christian* baptisms. But Mr. Hall affirms that "these baptisms *in no respect differed from John's.*" Consequently, John's baptism and Christian baptism, so far from being '*essentially different,*' were, on Mr. Hall's own showing, *identically the same!*

*M.* Not quite so fast, my friend. That our Lord authorized his disciples to baptize, is easily accounted for. John, "most probably, employed coadjutors:" and "our Lord was, in consequence of his being the Messiah, undoubtedly authorized personally to perform any religious rite or office which was at that time in force, as well as to delegate to others the power of performing it; and as immersion in token of repentance and preparation for the kingdom of God, then at hand, was an important branch of the religion then obligatory, it was with the greatest propriety that he not only submitted to it himself, but authorized his disciples to perform it. This, however, could not be considered as originating a new institution, but as a mere co-operation with his forerunner in one and the same work."—[*Terms*, 193, 194. *H.* 108.

S. So then, the greater was the servant of the inferior! the "bridegroom," the assistant of his "friend!" and the Lord Messiah, the coadjutor of his harbinger! Who can believe it? True, on *one* occasion, he "submitted" to John's baptism: but the objection of John on that occasion, the implied admission of its justice, and peculiar reason assigned for waiving it in that *one* instance, — ("Suffer it to be so *now*; for thus it becometh us, to fulfil all righteousness!")—forbid, most emphatically, the injurious supposition, that on *any other* occasion, there should be the least approach even to equal pretensions, much less to an implied inferiority. Thank you, my friend, for admitting that Christ *did* authorize his disciples to baptize, and that his right to do so originated in his being the Messiah. Whether this was a new institution, or a continuation of the rite introduced by John, is immaterial; since, whichever it was, it was an ordinance peculiar to the Christian dispensation, and was performed by Christ's disciples, in obedience to Christ's command; and was consequently, to all intents and purposes, Christian baptism. But that this was "*a mere co-operation with John,*" is by no means evident. Certainly, John's own disciples were not of this singular opinion; since they endeavored to provoke their master to jealousy, and represented Jesus as his rival, for no other reason whatever, than because, by his disciples, he *baptized*, and all men came to him. Either they had not the wisdom to discover, or the candor to acknowledge, that this was not *rivalry*, but "*co-operation!*" But why did not John undeceive them? Why did not he

tell them they were mistaken—that Jesus was acting as his “*coadjutor*?” For the best possible reason. This would not have been the truth. On the contrary, John acknowledges the rivalry—and accounts for it—and intimates that it is exactly what he had given them to expect—and actually rejoices in it! It was, in fact, a rivalry without opposition, and with the full concurrence of the harbinger. “Ye yourselves bear me witness, (said he,) that *I said I am not the Christ*, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice: this, therefore, my joy, is fulfilled. *He must increase; but I must decrease.*” And it is a fact not unworthy of remark, that we never, after this, read of John’s baptizing. He rejoiced in what his disciples communicated, notwithstanding it was at the expense of his own personal greatness; cordially acquiescing in that, which, to a proud spirit, would have been unspeakably mortifying: *He must increase; but I must decrease.* Indeed, this is in exact accordance with the office of the forerunner. He did not come to establish *his own* doctrine, or to introduce a kingdom of *his own*: he came as the harbinger of *Christ*, to ‘prepare the way of the *Lord.*’ Consequently, when Jesus entered on his personal ministry, and assumed the reins of government, John’s office naturally ceased: his work was accomplished, and the harbinger retired.

*M.* But “when we consider the great popularity attached to the ministry of the forerunner,

and the general submission of the Jewish people to his doctrine, it is in the highest degree improbable, that of the three thousand who were added by St. Peter to the church on one day, there were none who had been previously his disciples: this incredible supposition is reduced to an impossibility, when we recollect, that of the twelve apostles, two are actually affirmed by an Evangelist to have been of that number. But as it is universally admitted that they who were savingly convinced of the truth of Christianity *at the Pentecost*, were baptized on that occasion, what conclusion can be more inevitable, than that the rite administered by the harbinger of our Lord, was essentially distinct from the Christian ordinance?"—[*Ess. Diff.* 18, 19. *H.* 121.]

S. This, my friend, is one of those arguments which prove too much, and contains within itself the materials for its own refutation. If disciples of John *were* present, it does not follow, that they were *baptized* on this occasion: for if so, the apostles also should have been re-baptized—a supposition, of which there is not the least shadow of proof. Consequently, there were *some* of John's disciples present, who doubtless united in church fellowship, and who were not re-baptized. But that which was true of some, may have been true of others.\* One thing appears demonstrable—

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\* We are perfectly willing to admit, that of the disciples who had been baptized by John, and by the disciples of Christ, thousands were now present. They were the materials which had been prepared for the Lord's building. They had been "fitly framed" by conversion and baptism, while yet there was no visible building. The apostles were authorized to proceed in

that NONE OF THOSE WHO WERE ON THIS OCCASION BAPTIZED, WERE JOHN'S DISCIPLES. All who were baptized on this occasion were now, for the first time, "*pricked in their hearts*;" this was the period of their *conversion*: and Peter exhorted them to be baptized "*for the remission of sins*." But all John's disciples had already complied with a similar exhortation. The baptism of

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the organization of a church. And these disciples, as materials, and such others as in like manner were made ready on this occasion, while the Holy Spirit accompanied the preaching of Peter, are now, as a "whole body, fitly joined together." The apostles, to whom the building of the church was committed, now, agreeably to their commission, and the directions of the Saviour after his resurrection, commence their work. They step forward and raise the standard of the gospel, preaching its sacred, and tremendous, and joyous doctrines with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Many who till that day were enemies of Christ, are pricked in their heart; they gladly receive the word preached, and are baptized. Multitudes of previously baptized disciples, that are present, rally around the standard, and now publicly, for the first time after Christ's resurrection, show themselves on the Lord's side. What, on such an occasion, would be more likely to occur? And thus, in all, there are, the same day, added to the company of disciples mentioned in the fifteenth verse of the first chapter, "about three thousand souls."

The Christian church was now to assume a visible form; and its organization, as an associated body, to be governed by the laws of Christ, was to be rendered memorable, not by the "thunders and lightnings" of Sinai, but by the *descent* of the Holy Spirit.—(*Ex.* xix. 16. *Acts* i. 5: ii. 16, 17.)

In these "more glorious" circumstances, the new converts, and many of the former disciples, publicly unite with the apostles in constituting the first Christian church. And we read that "they continued stead-

John, the evangelist Mark informs us, was "the baptism of repentance *for the remission of sins*:" and to this baptism, "*confessing their sins*," all the disciples of John had previously submitted. Consequently, this could not be the period of their conversion: they could not now, for the first time, be "pricked in their hearts." However many of them, therefore, were present on this occasion,

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fastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."—(*Acts* ii. 42, 47.)

It is nowhere asserted in the Scriptures that *three thousand* were either *converted* or *baptized* on this day. We are not informed whether *fifty*, or *five-hundred*, or *more*, were *baptized* on this occasion. We are simply told, in reference to those who were then "pricked in their heart," who "gladly received the apostles' word," that they were baptized. "And," we are further informed, "the same day there were *added*," (not were *baptized*,) "about three thousand souls."

John had made "ready" and baptized thousands of disciples, from Jerusalem and Judea, "in the river of Jordan confessing their sins:" (Mark i. 5,) and Christ, it is said, "made and baptized more disciples than John." (John iv. 1.)

The Scriptures warrant us in saying that the apostles, and the hundred and twenty disciples, mentioned in the preceding chapter, were all present; and as many other of the disciples in Jerusalem and in that region as could conveniently be at the feast of Pentecost. And as the disciples were led, by the promise of the Saviour, (*Acts* i. 15,) to expect something extraordinary on this occasion, we may safely conclude that there was an unusual attendance of disciples at this feast, who in respect to baptism, were in a state similar to that of the apostles, and the rest of the hundred and twenty already mentioned, and to that of the *five hundred brethren* to whom our Lord at one time appeared after his resurrection.

*Editor.*

and united in church fellowship, it must have been by virtue of their former confession, as in the instance of the apostles. Your argument, my friend, admits of exactly the same reply as you would furnish to our Pedobaptist brethren, who infer, that, because households were baptized, therefore the apostles baptized infants. Whether there were infants in the households, or not, you do not care to decide; for you maintain, that if there were, they were not baptized: and why? Because there are certain circumstances stated of *all* who were baptized, *which could not apply to infants*. Now, my friend, I call this sound reasoning—reasoning so conclusive, that I glory in being able to adopt it on the present occasion. Whether, with the exception of the apostles, any of John's disciples were present, or not, I neither pretend nor care to decide; for I maintain, that if there were, they were not now baptized:—and why? Because there are certain circumstances stated of *all* who were now baptized, *which could not apply to John's disciples*. What those circumstances were, it is unnecessary to repeat.

*M.* But we have reason to conclude, that the repentance of John's disciples was “superficial, and that the greater part of such as appeared for a while most determined to press into the kingdom of God, afterwards sunk into a state of apathy. And even of the professed disciples of our Lord, many walked no more with him. A general declension succeeded, so that of the multitudes who once appeared to be much moved by his ministry, and that of his forerunner, the number which

persevered was so inconsiderable, that all that could be mustered to witness his resurrection amounted to little more than five hundred, a number which may be considered as constituting the whole body of the church, till the day of Pentecost."—[*Terms*, 33, 35. *H.* 38.]

S. That the number of disciples who were present after our Lord's resurrection, amounted to about five hundred, is certain; but that more could not have been mustered, or that this number constituted the aggregate amount of the church, will not be so readily conceded—the former position being confirmed by scripture, the latter being entirely destitute of proof. But, be that as it may, we know that John was exceedingly particular in his reception of disciples. When he saw many "of the Pharisees and Sadducees," coming to his baptism, he rebuked them, saying, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Luke informs us, that this exhortation was addressed to "*the multitude* that came forth to be baptized of him." The probability is, therefore, that, as all whom John baptized, were baptized "*confessing their sins*," multitudes came to his baptism who never submitted to that rite. Possibly, to adopt an expression used by our eloquent friend, "*prodigious multitudes*" came to his baptism; but that "multitudes" who presented themselves, were not admitted to that sacred rite, is established beyond a doubt. But if, for a moment, we were to *admit* your hypothesis,—that among the three thousand baptized at the Pente-



cost, there *were* some of John's disciples,—*then* I should be glad to be informed *why* they were re-baptized? Was it on the ground of their transient apostasy? or, of the invalidity of their former baptism? If on the ground of their apostasy, while re-baptism for such a reason would not invalidate John's baptism *as such*, it would render obligatory in our churches, a practice perfectly novel to modern Christians, and of which no traces can be discovered in ecclesiastical history—the re-baptism of penitent backsliders, prior to their restoration to the privileges of church fellowship. On the other hand, if this supposed re-baptism were on the ground of the invalidity of the ordinance administered previous to the Pentecost, then, not only should these supposed apostates have been re-baptized, but *all* John's disciples and *Christ's* disciples too, the faithful and the faithless, in one indiscriminate mass; those who adhered to their original profession, no less than those who had abandoned it, but who now repented:—the twelve apostles, the seventy disciples, the five hundred brethren,—*all* of whom death had not removed previous to the Pentecost, and who now retained their fidelity, must have been re-baptized, either on this occasion or subsequently, before they were admitted to the privileges of the Christian Church—a supposition, too absurd to be entertained for a single moment. Where, let me ask, is there a solitary instance of such a repetition of baptism?

*M.* I answer, confidently, that just such an instance occurred at Ephesus; where twelve of John's genuine disciples were re-baptized by

St. Paul ; the particulars of which are recorded in the 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

S. It is well known that critical expositors are not agreed concerning this passage, some being of the opinion that it was not intended to intimate a re-baptizing. But if we suppose it was, we can easily conceive of the reason. The transaction here mentioned occurred more than twenty years after John had ceased to baptize, and nearly the same length of time after Christ had given his final commission to the apostles. When he gave that commission, surely he did not annul what he had sanctioned before his crucifixion. He only adapted the form of words to the full display which it was now proper for them to make of his divine character, and the system of redemption, and thus gave a rule respecting the baptisms which were to be administered after that period. In the case of these disciples, who, it is almost certain, were baptized after that period, this rule, which was then in force as a law of Christ, had been disregarded. And the apostle might well require its being scrupulously observed. Besides, Paul may have perceived a radical defect in the religious instruction which they had received previously to baptism. They had not, perhaps, in connexion with their being baptized, been directed at all to the great object of evangelic faith. They were now, indeed, believers in Christ. But they might have been baptized a few years before, by some one who had, some years still earlier, received baptism from John or some of his disciples in Palestine, but who had failed to communicate to them the whole of the instruction that John had been in the habit of com-

municating. They might afterwards have been brought to the knowledge of the Saviour through the preaching of such a man as Apollos. They resided nearly a thousand miles from the scene of John's labors. And it is not said, nor is it at all probable, that they had been baptized by John, but only "unto John's baptism;" and they seem to have been ignorant, in a great degree, of what it implied. On this subject they still needed to be instructed. 'Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him who should come after him; that is, on Christ Jesus.' Among all the followers of Christ that had been baptized either by John or the apostles before the giving of the final commission, not one, so far as we have any account, was re-baptized. Recollect, my friend, what was the fact in regard also to Apollos. 'This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and, being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, *knowing only the baptism of John.*' When Priscilla and Aquila met with him, they did not re-baptize him. They only 'expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly;' as we learn from Acts xviii. 25, 26.\*

*M.* I have listened very attentively to all your observations this evening, and will give them due consideration. You will not, of course, expect me now to express my opinion of their validity; though

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\* See the Amer. Bap. Magazine for the year 1825, p. 374—and Knappii Scripta varii argumenti, maximam partem exegetici et historici.—Vol. 1. pp. 163—4.

I have no doubt *you* think them conclusive! But, even if they be, how unimportant is your victory! What, after all, have you achieved? As I observed at the commencement of this Conversation, “the admission of what you contend for, would merely prove that the ordinance of baptism was promulgated at an *earlier period* than the Lord’s supper. But in determining a question of duty resulting from laws, the era of their promulgation is a consideration totally foreign: we have merely to consider *what is enjoined*; and to what description of persons or things the regulation applies, without troubling ourselves to inquire into the chronological order of its enactment. In the details of civil life, no man thinks of regulating his actions by an appeal to the respective dates of the existing laws, but solely by a regard to their just interpretation; and were it once admitted as a maxim, that the particular law latest enacted must invariably be last obeyed, the affairs of mankind would fall into utter confusion. It is a principle as repugnant to the nature of divine, as it is to human legislation. It appears from the history of the patriarchs, that sacrificial rites were ordained much earlier than circumcision; but no sooner was the latter enjoined, than it demanded the earliest attention, and the offerings prescribed on the birth of a child did not precede, but were subsequent to, the ceremony of circumcision.”—[*Ess. Diff.* 6—8. *H.* 116.]

S. Pardon me, my dear friend, if I venture to think that you reason much more conclusively respecting the details of civil life, than in relation to divine institutions. Surely, you must have for-

gotten your own rule of interpretation,—that we have not merely to consider what is enjoined, but also “*to what description of persons or things the regulation applies,*”—or you never would have hazarded the assertion, that “sacrificial rites were ordained earlier than circumcision.” For, while this is true in itself, it is *not true in relation to the persons to whom the rite of circumcision applies.* Sacrifices were *not* enjoined *on them*, prior to circumcision; except, indeed, in the instance of its first recipients, who attended to each *in the order of divine appointment.* Consequently, your inference is not sustained. In relation to the affairs of civil life, and distinct regulations, your remarks may be just. But suppose one law is not only promulgated at an earlier period than another, but in a subsequent code of laws, is appointed *to be observed in a certain order*—immediately after obedience to previous duties, and *before* the observance of certain other duties—to *such a case* your reasoning is totally inapplicable. It is not merely because baptism was promulgated at an *earlier period* than the Lord’s supper, that we plead for our practice; but because, in our Lord’s commission, which is the LAW to which we refer you, and which was invariably acted upon by the apostles, *the order in which baptism is to be observed* is distinctly stated—a deviation from which, is, in our opinion, a breach of the law. But we must not now enter on the general question. If you please, our next Conversation shall be on *the connexion between baptism and church fellowship.*

M. Agreed.

## CONVERSATION III.

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BAPTISM AS INDISPENSABLE A PREREQUISITE TO  
EXTERNAL CHURCH FELLOWSHIP, AS FAITH IS  
TO BAPTISM.

## ANALYSIS.

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The Christian commission the law of the Christian church ; in which the separate laws of faith, and baptism, and church fellowship, are exhibited in connexion, each occupying its appointed, and therefore unchangeable place. Baxter, in confirmation. His inconsistency. Bishop Taylor reasons as if the *minimum of evidence* contained the *maximum of truth* ; and *vice versa* ! The order for which we contend, confessedly “the *prescribed order* :” consequently, unless we know better than the Legislator, it must be the order *observed*. A peculiar reason for a prohibition in relation to circumcision and baptism. A prohibition of an unbaptized believer from the Lord’s supper would be perfectly ridiculous, the law not *allowing* such an anomaly. A Baptist, of all others, no right to require a prohibition. The Mixed Baptist reasons with Pedobaptists as we reason with him : and then, when *we* adopt it, is dissatisfied with his own reasoning ! The arguments for restricted communion precisely similar to those for restricted baptism. And *vice versa*. Neither the Mixed Baptist nor the Strict Communion Pedobaptist, can plead the order of the Christian commission, or apostolic precedent, without an exposure to the mortification of a retort. M. and Mr. Hall of different opinions respecting “the *natural order* of the Christian sacraments ;” S. agreeing with Mr. Hall ! M. to be consistent, should renounce the order of the Christian commission *entirely*, and be a Mixed Pedobaptist ; or adhere to it *as a whole*, and be a Strict Baptist. The Strict Baptist misrepresented. Baptism, properly administered, superior to any pulpit exercise whatever. Our union with Pedobaptists, in prayer and praise and preaching the gospel and Christian benevolence, not a violation of our principle. M. ridicules the distinction between universal Christian duties and exercises peculiar to church fellowship, as a mere logomachy. Which Mr. Hall, more sensibly recognizes and avows ! The hypothesis, that the rules of admission into the church-militant and the church-triumphant are the same, a mere assumption, totally incapable of proof. Christ acts as a Sovereign : we must act as servants. Church members to be instructed to observe *all things whatsoever* Christ commanded : but those who are not church members, not to be instructed to observe *all things*, but only such things as are obligatory irrespective of church-membership. Apostolic precedent.

## CONVERSATION III.

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*M.* I presume, my dear friend, we shall have but a short discussion, to-night: since I am of opinion with Mr. Hall, that “the chief, I might say the only, argument for the restricted plan of communion is derived from the example of the apostles, and the practice of the primitive church.” —[*Reasons* 7. *H.* 285.]

*S.* This is not exactly correct. I humbly conceive that our arguments for restricted communion are precisely as numerous and conclusive as yours for restricting baptism to believers; and that, to be consistent, you must either abandon your own position—that faith is an indispensable prerequisite to baptism; or admit ours—that baptism is an indispensable prerequisite to church fellowship; both positions being established on the same evidence. Undoubtedly, the example of the apostles is extremely valuable to us, as well as to you; since it shows how they understood their Lord’s commission, and how punctiliously they adhered to it. Indeed, without John’s baptism and the example of the apostles, both the Baptist and the Strict Baptist would have a more difficult task to perform, each in confuting his respective opponents, than at present falls to their lot. The example of the apostles is, unquestionably,



an important auxiliary to us both ; since it elucidates the meaning of our Lord's commission, beyond all contradiction. Besides which, their injunctions on the first churches, to imitate their example, to "keep the ordinances as they delivered them," must equally apply to *our* churches. But, following your own example in reasoning with your Pedobaptist brethren, it is to the *commission*, the *law itself*, that we refer you, as the *authority* on which our practice is founded—as the primary, direct, authoritative rule—(confirmed, and reiterated, and enforced by the apostles,) by which we must be governed in the organization of our churches—a law, we humbly conceive, of peremptory and perpetual obligation.

*M.* My good friend, "we are agreed with you respecting the *law* of baptism. But the present inquiry turns not on the nature or obligation of baptism, but on the *necessary dependence* of another institution upon it. It is inconceivable, how any thing more is deducible from the *law* of baptism, than its present and perpetual obligation. The existence of a law establishes the obligation of a corresponding duty, and nothing more."—[*Reply*, 16, 17. H. 162.]

*S.* Thank you, my friend, for conceding that the existence of a law *does* establish the obligation of a corresponding duty—a position, we presume, of universal application. But you totally mistake us, if you imagine we refer to the law of *baptism* only. Not, indeed, that I am surprised at this ; for it is a mistake into which the advocates of mixed communion are perpetually falling : as if

the laws of baptism and church fellowship were so totally distinct, that they could never be viewed in connexion; while, with marvellous inconsistency, they confidently maintain, that both these laws are inseparably connected with a prior, and equally distinct law—the law of faith! But the law to which we refer embraces *all* these, and exhibits their connexion, and their dependence on each other. It is THE COMMISSION OF CHRIST, and may be appropriately designated, THE LAW OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—a law, in which the distinct laws of faith, and baptism, and visible church fellowship, are introduced as parts, or sections, of one complete whole, each part occupying its appointed, and therefore unchangeable place. It is *one* law, and requires the performance of certain duties *in a certain order*. The order in which these duties were *first enjoined*, is of comparatively inferior importance; but the order in which they are here commanded to be *observed*, is the order in which they *must* be observed, or the law is violated. As the pious RICHARD BAXTER observes, relative to this law,—(*Disputation of Right to Sacraments*, 149, 150.)—“This is not like some occasional, historical mention of baptism; but it is the very commission of Christ to his apostles; and *purposely* expresseth their several works, *in their several places and order*. Their first work is, by teaching, to make disciples; which are by Mark, called believers. Their *second* work is, to baptize them. Their *third* work is, to teach them all other things which are to be learned in the school of Christ. To condemn this order, is to renounce all rules of order; for where can we expect to find it, if not here? I profess my con-

science is fully satisfied, from this text, that it is one sort of faith, even saving, that *must* go before baptism." He might have added, by a parity of reasoning, that it is one sort of baptism, even that which Christ enjoined, that *must* go before church fellowship. Indeed, in his *Plain Scripture Proof*, (p. 126,) he *does* say, "If any should be so impudent, as to say it is not the meaning of Christ, that baptism should *immediately, without delay*, follow discipling, they are confuted by the constant example of scripture. So that I dare say this will be out of doubt with all rational, considerate, and impartial Christians." And, in the 24th page of the same publication, he asks, "What man dare go in a way which hath neither precept nor example to warrant it, from a way that hath a full current of both?" and replies, "Yet they that will admit members into the visible church without baptism, do so."\*

*M.* But, "to justify the exclusion of sincere and conscientious Pedobaptists, it is not sufficient

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\* How Mr. Baxter could reconcile the above, and the quotations below, with his practice as a Pedobaptist, is to us rather mysterious: but, believing he was "sincere and conscientious," we presume he came to some such conclusion as Jeremy Taylor; who honestly confesses, "I think there is so much to be pretended against that which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more truth than *evidence* on our side."—*Liberty of Prophecy-ing*, xviii. 245. The only difficulty is, to conceive how, *with such a preponderance of evidence against him*, the good Bishop should be so unphilosophical as to *believe* that his sentiments were true!

"If," says Mr. Baxter, "there be *no example* given in scripture of any one that was baptized without the profession of saving faith, *nor any precept* for so doing, then must *we* not baptize any without it. But the an-

to allege the prescribed *order* of the institutions: it is——

S. Excuse me, my friend, for interrupting you: but a remark at the beginning of a sentence may be forgotten if not noticed immediately. I merely wish to observe, that the *prescribed order must* be observed, unless we pretend to be wiser than the Legislator by whom it is prescribed. If the order were *accidental*, we might, perhaps, venture to deviate; but, since what we plead for is, on your own confession, “the *prescribed order*,” it must, if we would maintain any pretensions to obedience, be the order *observed*.—But please to proceed.

M. I was about to observe, that “it is not sufficient to allege the prescribed *order* of the institutions; it is necessary also to evince such a *dependence* of one upon the other, that a neglect of the first from involuntary mistake annuls the obligation of the second. Let this dependence be one clearly pointed out, and we give up the cause. It has been asserted, indeed, with much confidence, that we have the same authority for confining our communion to baptized persons, as the ancient Jews for admitting none but such as had

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tecedent is true; therefore so is the consequent. I know of no one word in scripture that giveth us the least encouragement to baptize upon another faith.”—*Disputation of Right to Sacraments*, 149, 151.

But, perhaps, Mr. Baxter baptized infants, as *the seed of Abraham*? No such thing. He tells us, in the same performance, (114, 115.) “None are Abraham’s seed, in scripture, gospel sense, but those *cordially*, that *are* true believers; and those *appearingly*, that *profess* true faith.”—This is proved Rom. ix. 4, 6, 7, 8. Rom. iv. 11, 12, 13. So Gal. iii. 6—9, 14, 16,

been circumcised, to the passover." But the contrary is demonstrable. In the former case, there is an express prohibition—"No *uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*" But where, let me ask, is it asserted in the New Testament, that no unbaptized person shall partake of the eucharist?—[*Terms*, 46, 47. H. 43.]

S. Nowhere, certainly. But why? Because such a prohibition is not only perfectly unnecessary, but would be ineffably absurd. I might ask, with at least equal propriety—Where is it asserted, in the New Testament, that an unbaptized person *may* partake of the Lord's supper? and you would be compelled to reply, Nowhere. There was a *reason*, my friend, for an express prohibition in relation to the Old Testament rites, which does not exist in relation to those of the New Testament. The passover was a *family* rite, of which, consequently, without a prohibition, *all* the family would naturally expect to partake; while there were some of its members, who were not only uncircumcised, but who were *not under an obligation* to be circumcised. But the Lord's supper is a *church* ordinance; and there is not an individual member of the church of Christ, on whom *baptism* is not obligatory. If, indeed, there were any believers who *might* remain unbaptized, then, to justify *their* exclusion from the Lord's supper, a prohibition might be necessary; but, seeing that baptism is enjoined on *all* believers, the prohibition of an *unbaptized* believer would be in the very last degree ridiculous. Such a singular document,—(a virtual repeal, in fact, of the *law* of baptism, conveying an implied *permission* to neg-

lect it!)—would exhibit an indecision, not to say imbecility, utterly unworthy of Him, who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” Consequently, whatever may be thought of the inference in favor of restricted communion, drawn from the connexion which subsisted between circumcision and the passover, the absence of a *prohibition* in relation to the Christian ordinances ought never to be urged against it. Besides, my friend, with what show of fairness can you *require* a prohibition?—you, of all others! who deny the right of your Pedobaptist brethren to require of *you* a similar prohibition of *their* practice? You maintain a *necessary connexion* between faith and baptism. You assert, not only that faith is a duty, that baptism is a duty, and that both are of perpetual obligation; but also that *no unbeliever is entitled to baptism*; nor will you allow the “involuntary” unbeliever—the unconscious babe—who, if it were to die, would be “instantaneously admitted to glory,”—the privilege of being an exception to your sweeping exclusion. Your Pedobaptist brother might turn round upon you, and say, (adopting your own reasoning with us,) ‘To justify the exclusion of infants from baptism, it is not sufficient to allege the prescribed *order* of faith and baptism: it is necessary also to evince such a *dependance* of one upon the other, that the involuntary absence of the first annuls the obligation of the second. And where, let me ask, is it asserted, in the New Testament, that *no unbeliever shall be baptized?*’ In reply, my friend, you would be compelled to resort to the same mode of reasoning as we adopt in the present controversy; but with which, when

*we* adopt it, you, with glaring inconsistency, profess yourself dissatisfied ! Our reasons for refusing to unite with the unbaptized in church-fellowship, are as conclusive as yours for refusing to administer baptism to infants. You have no more scriptural evidence that faith is an indispensable term of baptism, than we have that baptism is an indispensable term of communion. You cannot produce, any more than we can, an *expressed* necessary connexion. It is nowhere *explicitly stated* that faith and baptism are inseparable. You cannot furnish a prohibition of an unbeliever from baptism. And yet you confidently maintain your position and uniformly act upon it, not excepting even the *involuntary* unbeliever : and then, with the most flagrant injustice, you deny us the privilege of maintaining our position on precisely your own principles ! Is *this* liberality ? A Pedobaptist might say to you, “If teaching and faith be indispensable to baptism, why did not Jesus Christ explicitly *say* so, and *forbid* his ministers to baptize any who were not thus qualified ?” In fact, they do argue thus ; and are you silenced ? No, indeed. You reply, and very properly, “A prohibition is not necessary : the command is sufficient. Read our Lord’s commission : ‘Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ Is not this plainly *the order* in which these duties are to be performed ? *First*, we are to teach men the gospel ; and then, *secondly*, on their believing the gospel, we are to baptize them.” But, my friend, this is precisely what *we* plead, extending the argument, with perfect con-

sistency, to the conclusion. You remind me very forcibly of our Pedobaptist brethren, who stop short at the word *children*, in that memorable promise of the Holy Spirit, quoted from the prophecies of Joel, by the Apostle Peter, in his pentecostal sermon. But *why* do you stop short, before you come to the conclusion? Is not the latter part of our Lord's commission as authoritative as the former? Or, is the order of it binding in one particular, and discretionary in another? Do not *we* as conclusively maintain that the second duty must precede the third, as *you* insist that the first must precede the second? Surely, if teaching be intentionally enjoined as the *first* duty, baptism is intentionally enjoined as the *second* duty, and visible church fellowship as the *third* duty; and, I humbly conceive, we are no more at liberty to invert the order in one case, than in another. We have precisely the same authority, then, for maintaining that baptism should precede visible church fellowship, as you have for insisting that faith should precede baptism. The two positions stand or fall together.\* With what

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\* And were the writer, as a Baptist, reasoning with his Pedobaptist brethren,—(who almost unanimously practise strict communion, refusing to admit to their communion any but those who are in *their* judgment baptized; )—he might adopt the same principle, only reversing the argument, and say, We have precisely the same authority for maintaining that teaching should precede baptism, as you have for insisting that what you believe to be Christian baptism should precede visible church fellowship. The two positions stand or fall together. But, from either a Mixed Communion Baptist, or a Strict Communion Pedobaptist, this argument would be nugatory; for though each should convict his



show of fairness, my friend, can you require more explicit evidence from us, in favor of restricted communion, than you can furnish to your Pedobaptist brethren, in favor of your own plan of restricted baptism? Do you plead the *commission*? So do we. Do you say, there is *no command* to baptize infants? Neither can you produce a command to receive the unbaptized to church fellowship. Do you maintain that there is *no example* of infant baptism? Neither is there any example of mixed communion. Were the can-

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brother of inconsistency, both might expect the retort courteous—‘And what then? If we *be* inconsistent with ourselves, *you* should be silent; for so ARE YOU: if we invert the order of the commission in *one* particular, you invert it in *another*! And thus, while they persisted in obeying the commission *between them*—one party pleading for one part only, and the other exclusively for the remainder—neither would be likely to produce conviction in the mind of his brother. Those, and those only, who observe the order of the commission *as a whole* can point out the deviations of their brethren, without exposing themselves to the mortification of a retort. Before either the Strict Pedobaptist or the Mixed Baptist can, with any propriety, impugn *our* peculiar sentiments, they must abandon, the former his strict communion, and the latter his baptism. They would then, certainly, be *one body*,—having one Lord, one faith, and avowedly one baptism; and they might unite in one common cause. But what a union!—a union in displacing both *faith* and *baptism* from the position in which they were fixed by their common *Lord*! We, however, with all humility, as becometh “a sect every where spoken against,” would be well content with the cast-off-principles of our brethren: and should they dispute our right of possession, to these, we are prepared with an unimpeachable title—a special bequest in the last Will and Testament of our Sovereign Lord.

didates for baptism, in the judgment of the apostles, invariably *believers*? The members of their churches were, in the same judgment, uniformly *baptized* believers.

*M.* But there is a *natural* connexion between faith and baptism, which certainly does not exist between baptism and the Lord's supper. Baptism is a profession of faith; and the profession of that which has no existence, is, in the last degree, unmeaning and absurd. But, "that there is no *natural* connexion between baptism and the Lord's supper, is obvious. They were instituted at different times, and for different purposes: baptism is a mode of professing our faith in the blessed trinity; the Lord's supper is a commemoration of the dying love of the Redeemer: the former is the act of an individual, the latter of a society. The words which contain our warrant for the celebration of the eucharist, convey no allusion to baptism whatever: those which prescribe baptism carry no anticipative reference to the eucharist."—[*Reasons* 21. *H.* 292.]

*S.* But how is this? You are at variance with your friend Mr. Hall! And, (which, perhaps, you will consider more wonderful still,) I am perfectly satisfied he is correct! He honestly concedes that *there is* a natural connexion between baptism and the Lord's supper. Allow me just to read a sentence or two from his first publication on this controversy:—[*Terms*, 69. *H.* 53.] "I must remark," he says, "that in insisting upon the *prior* claim which baptism possesses to the attention of a Christian convert, the advocates of strict communion tri-

umph without an opponent. We know of *none* who contend for the propriety of inverting the *natural order* of the Christian sacraments, where they can both be attended to, that is, when the nature of each is clearly understood and confessed."

*M.* But in this I cordially agree with my friend.

*S.* In *one* particular, I admit you do. You have no desire to *invert* the natural order of the two ordinances, except in certain circumstances. But on *another* point, (the point for which I am contending,) you are *not* agreed. For, while he pleads for the *inversion* of the natural order on some occasions—(which, indeed, is not surprising; since he also pleads for the inversion of the order which, by his own confession, *Christ himself prescribed!*—he *does* admit that the order for which we plead is "the natural order:" which you deny. *He* says, the order for which we plead, and which he would observe, except under certain circumstances, is "the *natural* order of the Christian sacraments." *You*, on the other hand, assert, that between these two ordinances "there is *no natural* connexion." Now, my friend, I cannot agree with both of you; and my judgment certainly coincides with Mr. Hall's.

*M.* But I have some reason to believe that my friend Mr. Hall has changed his opinion on this point, and that now he agrees with me. Consequently the question returns upon you:—Is there, or is there not, between the sacraments, a *natural* connexion? That there is *not*, is in my opinion obvious, for the reasons I have just now stated.—  
[*M.* p. 98.]

S. But surely, my friend, you do not mean to affirm, that because the nature and design of the two ordinances are not in all respects the same, therefore there can exist between them no natural connexion! On this principle, nothing would be easier than to undermine the connexion between faith and baptism, the points of difference being equally obvious. A Pedobaptist, availing himself of your own reasoning against us, might say,—‘Brother M., I admire your arguments exceedingly; I think they are perfectly conclusive; and I cannot but indulge the hope that you will perceive their force also in relation to the alleged connexion between *faith* and *baptism*. That there is no *natural* connexion between them, is obvious. Faith is a divine principle, an exercise of the mind; baptism is an external ceremony, “the sacramental use of water.” Faith is required to be in constant exercise; baptism is “a transient rite,” to be administered but once. Faith is essential to salvation; but myriads, we trust, are in heaven, who were never baptized.’ It is true, my friend, if your Pedobaptist brother practised strict communion, (as most of them do,) you might exchange these arguments *ad infinitum*; alternately ‘accusing and excusing’ one another. But just suppose he was one of a modern few among them, who *agree* with you on communion—*then* how would you reply? If you *admitted* his argument, you would abandon the connexion between faith and baptism: if you *rebutted* his reasoning, precisely your own arguments would confute your present position—that there is no natural connexion between baptism and the Lord’s supper. Baptism is *the divinely appointed mode* of

avowing our union with the Head of the Christian church : a public pledge, before the church and the world, that having cordially accepted the offers of his grace, we devote ourselves unreservedly to his service, and will continue faithful unto death. But surely, the *natural* position of such an ordinance, is, obviously, at the *commencement* of the new relation, and *prior* to a participation of any of its peculiar privileges. Baptism, like the connubial rite, recognizes equally the past and the future. A public avowal of a union with Christ *prior to its existence*, and a participation of the privileges peculiar to such a union *previous to its avowal*, in the mode, and only mode of divine appointment, are equally an inversion of the order of *nature*. Consequently, the Lord's supper being an ordinance peculiar to a church-relation, and baptism being the divinely-appointed mode of *entrance* into the visible church, the *priority* of baptism to the supper is founded no less in *the nature of things*, than in the uniform representations of scripture, whether in relation to the Christian commission, or to the undeviating practice of the first and purest age of the Christian church. And to unite with any person in the celebration of that ordinance which is a commemoration of the death of Christ, who has not, in obedience to his command, been "baptized into (the belief of) his death," appears to me, (no less than a few years ago it appeared to Mr. Hall,) a manifest inversion of "*the natural order of the Christian sacraments*;" which we also unite in believing to be "*the prescribed order*." The only point on which we are at issue, is, whether we are at liberty to *invert* this order, in deference to

the erroneous notions of modern Christians—in other words, whether we may make a nose of wax of our Lord's commission, to be moulded into any shape, to accommodate every error of every Christian. *My* belief is, that the law of Christ is immutable, no less in its order than in its requirements—an order, equally commending itself to the judgment, whether we appeal to the commission, to the uniform practice of the apostles, or to the dictates of reason, suggested by a calm consideration of the *design* of the two ordinances. Baptism is a "*putting on*" Christ; and the *only appointed* mode of *entering* his visible church. But the Lord's supper is a perpetual remembrance of that affecting transaction, into the belief of which all its recipients, in the first churches, were previously baptized. To *invert* this order, therefore, is a deviation from both scripture and reason; and, as Baxter has well said, a renunciation of all the rules of order. From a review of the whole, my friend, you must allow me again to remind you, that if you would make any pretensions to consistency, you must either abandon your own position,—that faith is indispensable to baptism—(unless, indeed, you can establish it on *higher* authority than the commission of Christ, the uniform practice of the apostles, and the nature of things!)—*or*, you must allow that precisely the same arguments are conclusive in proof of restricted communion. You cannot, with any show of reason, maintain their validity in the one case, and deny it in the other. The two positions are supported by the same kind of evidence, and must stand or fall together. Take your choice, then, my friend; renounce the order of the

commission *entirely*, and be a Mixed Pedobaptist; or adhere to it as a whole, and be a Strict Baptist. In either case you will at least be consistent.

*M.* But I am not quite satisfied of *your own* consistency yet! Either, you should “follow out your principles to their just consequences, by withholding from the members of other denominations *every* token of fraternal regard; or freely admit them to the Lord’s table. As the case stands at present, your mode of proceeding is utterly untenable. In a variety of instances, you indulge yourself in those acts of communion with Pedobaptists which are peculiar to Christians: you frequently make them your mouth in addressing the Deity, exchange pulpits, and even engage their assistance in exercises intended as a preparation for the eucharist; and after lighting the flame of devotion at their torch, you most preposterously turn round to inform them that they are not worthy to participate!—Is the observance of an external rite, let me ask, a more solemn part of religion, than addressing the Majesty of heaven and of earth? And shall we depute *him* to present our prayers at his footstool, who would defile a sacrament by his presence?”—[*Reasons*, 37, 38. *H.* 299.]

*S.* Far be it from me, my friend, to depreciate the solemn exercise of prayer: but neither should it be exalted at the expense of an ordinance of Jesus Christ, equally imperative, equally an act of worship, equally edifying; and, when it is attended to, *as it ought to be*, “with all the heart, and mind, and soul,” more interesting, more solemn, more affecting, more beneficial, than any ordinary

pulpit exercise whatever. True, indeed, this "sacramental use of water," this "transient ceremony," as it is designated, has, in some places, degenerated into a very vapid, dull, tame, uninteresting sort of thing—as much *like* a mere ceremony, as as any thing *not* a mere ceremony can possibly be. But, my friend, let the ordinance of baptism occupy its proper place, and be viewed in its scriptural import, and its important bearings and relations,—and, next to the conversion of a sinner, it becomes the most interesting spectacle on earth, that men or angels witness. Passing this, however, I must be allowed to remark, that you greatly misrepresent us. We are not chargeable with the inconsistency you allege against us. We do *not* tell our Pedobaptist brother that he is "*not worthy*" to partake of the Lord's supper. We do *not* affirm that he would "*defile a sacrament* by his presence." We only refuse to *unite* with him in what we believe to be an irregular and unauthorized reception of it. And we never insult a Pedobaptist minister, by inviting him to "assist in an exercise intended as a preparation for the eucharist." For his services on such occasions, we are indebted, we presume, to the friends of mixed communion! \*

M. But still, you *do* unite with Pedobaptists voluntarily and spontaneously, in innumerable Christian exercises; in prayer, and praise, and preaching the gospel: and in a variety of benevolent institutions for the melioration of the miseries of mankind, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom.

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\* We may charitably presume, that such an arrangement is simply the result of *inconsideration*.



S. Undoubtedly we do; but what then? None of these exercises are *peculiar* to *church fellowship*. They are incumbent upon us in our *individual* capacity, whether we are connected with a Christian church or not. You greatly mistake, if you suppose we consider the absence of baptism as a disqualification for the *Lord's supper only*. Baptism being the divinely-appointed mode of *entrance* into the visible church, we consider the absence of it, (as far as *our concurrence* is concerned,) as a disqualification for *all* the offices and exercises *peculiar to churches*. We decline a union with Pedobaptists in the celebration of the Lord's supper, because it is a *church* ordinance; and to unite with those as church members, who, in our opinion, have not entered the church by the door of Christ's appointing, would be, we conceive, a most unworthy reflection on his wisdom, and disregard of his just authority. Since he has appointed baptism as the mode in which all believers shall be admitted to visible church fellowship, who are we, that we should presume to receive them *without* baptism, to any of the exercises peculiar to Christian churches, as such? We should not elect a Pedobaptist to the office of either *pastor* or *deacon*; for they are *church* offices: and, on the same principle, we decline a joint participation of the Lord's supper. But prayer, and praise, and preaching the gospel, and Christian benevolence, are *not* acts peculiar to churches. They were duties before the formation of a single Christian church, and would have been duties to the end of time, had no such institution existed. A union with Pedobaptists, therefore, in *these* exercises, is *not* a

deviation from our principle. In such a co-operation, we should unite with them, not as church members, in the celebration of an ordinance peculiar to churches; but as Christians, in the pursuit of objects in which *all* good men should engage, whether united to a church, or not. In uniting with Pedobaptists, in prayer, and praise, and preaching the gospel, and acts of benevolence, we cultivate such a union as evidently is our duty: but a joint-participation of the Lord's supper with Pedobaptists would be a *deliberate concurrence* in such a reception of the ordinance as is, in our opinion, decidedly unscriptural: and this *cannot* be our duty. It may be *their* duty to *partake* of the Lord's supper, since they believe they have attended to "the prior obligation," every man being required to act on his own principles: but while our belief is the very reverse of theirs, *our union* with them, in what we believe to be an unscriptural reception of the ordinance, would undoubtedly be, on *our* part, a manifest dereliction of principle. Nor can even the *Mixed* Baptist be exonerated from blame, until he can show that he has a *right* to unite in that system of church fellowship, which *he also* is compelled to acknowledge is unscriptural. When you detect us, my friend, in uniting with persons, who are in our estimation unbaptized, in *any* office, in *any* exercise *peculiar to church fellowship*, then you may inveigh against our consistency; but otherwise, your allegation is groundless. We unite with Pedobaptists in prayer, and praise, and Christian benevolence; for they are *universal* duties. We unite with them in preaching the gospel, because it is the duty of *all* who "know the joyful sound,"

to publish it. We love the brethren, because we are *commanded* to love them, and because there is that in Christianity with which the heart of every Christian beats in unison. And, inasmuch as we are commanded to love them “for the truth’s sake that dwelleth in them,” we entertain the highest regard for those who appear to live most under the influence of divine truth in general, irrespective of their sentiments on *any one* point of truth whatever. But when we are required to unite with Pedobaptists in an ordinance *peculiar to Christian churches*, our minds naturally revert to the Christian commission—the peremptory and perpetual *law of the Christian church*, no less in its order than in its requirements: and while we should rejoice to receive our brethren in the way which *Christ* has appointed, we do not feel at liberty to receive them in any other way.—But, why do you smile?

M. Why, truly, my friend, I cannot help it. “The only color invented to hide this glaring inconsistency, is so pure a logomachy, that it is difficult to think of it with becoming gravity. You remind us, forsooth, that the expressions of Christian affection in praying and preaching for each other, are not church-acts, as though there were some magic in the word church, that could change the nature of truth, or the obligations of duty. If it is our duty to recognize those as our fellow Christians who are really such, what is there in the idea of a church that should render it improper there?”—[*Reasons*, 38, 39. H. 300.]—But, how serious you look! I hope I have not offended you,

S. No, my friend, I am not offended ; but I confess I feel hurt at the manner in which you speak of a Christian church. Allow me, on this subject, to refer you to your excellent friend, Mr. Hall. If you were to consult him, he would teach you better. In his Memoir of the late Mr. Toller, of Kettering he says, "Churches are the institution of God." If so, Christian churches are the institution of Christ, and deserve to be mentioned with a little more decorum. And allow me just to say, my friend, that we do *not* think there is any "*magic in the word church*," that can change the nature of truth, or the obligations of duty. We do *not* suppose there is any thing in the idea of a church, that should render it improper there to recognize as fellow Christians those who are really such. But we *do* suppose it would be improper to receive even Christians to a church ordinance in any other way than *that* appointed by the Head of the Christian church. And, "pure a logomachy" as *you* are pleased to designate our distinction between universal Christian duties and church fellowship, it is A DISTINCTION WHICH MR. HALL RECOGNIZES AND AVOWS, AND PARTIALLY REDUCES TO PRACTICE.

M. Impossible !

S. Nay, my friend, I assure you I am serious. Upon what other principle, let me ask, could he have penned that most extraordinary paragraph, commencing on the 12th page of his *Reasons for Christian Communion*?—[H. 288.]—In that passage he introduces to our attention a candidate for church fellowship ; and represents "the minister,"—(a Mixed Baptist !)—as inquiring into his views of the ordinance of *baptism* !—and this, *as a matter*

*of course!* But why, I wonder, should he institute an inquiry on *that* particular subject, at *that* particular time?—an inquiry, natural enough, we should say from one who maintains a peculiar connexion between baptism and church fellowship: but how are we to account for *his* putting the question? Is he accustomed to introduce this subject in relation to *other* Christian unions? If, for example, his friend instead of desiring the privileges of church fellowship, had proposed that they should unite in a social *prayer meeting*, or in *preaching the gospel*, or in promoting the interests of an *Auxiliary Bible Society*,—would he, on either of *these* propositions, (think you,) have sounded his friend on the subject of *baptism*? Nay, would he not indignantly repel the insinuation, and unhesitatingly pronounce the man who *would* institute such an inquiry, in such a connexion, a bigot of the very deepest tincture? But why does he observe a difference? Why does he make a distinction? Why does he pointedly—however “respectfully,”—put the question in *one* case, and not in *all*? On *other* occasions, he would spurn the idea of trying the consciences of his Pedobaptist brethren on the subject of baptism; except, indeed, in friendly discussion on equal ground—but let them propose to join his *church*, and the case is altered—a tribunal is erected—and they must pass through an ordeal! He does not, indeed, require, as *indispensable*, that they shall be *baptized*: but he *does* require, either that they *shall be*, or that they shall believe they *have been* baptized! But *why*? Why even *this* stipulation? Why cannot he receive them to a *church* union, as well as to a union in *other* Chris-

tian exercises, without instituting *any* inquisitorial process, however gentle and respectful, on the subject of *baptism*? Surely that heterodox and narrow notion, maintained by *us*—that there is a PECULIAR CONNEXION between baptism and church fellowship—must, by some strange, unaccountable fatality,—(or, rather, may we not hope, by a sort of *scriptural instinct*!)—have taken possession of his mind, and controlled his pastoral examination! Seriously, my friend,—seeing he would *not* introduce the subject of baptism in relation to a proposed union in the exercises of prayer, and praise, and preaching the gospel, and Christian benevolence, (as, indeed, he *ought* not; )—and seeing he *would*—and would *as a matter of course*—introduce the subject in relation to a *church* union; the conclusion is inevitable—that *Mr. Hall* distinctly recognizes, and avowedly reduces to practice, the identical principle, for the statement of which *you* hold us up to ridicule—*viz.* that there is a *peculiar connexion* between baptism and church fellowship!

*M.* But the case to which you allude, is only a *supposed* case.

*S.* Very true; but it is a case of *Mr. Hall's* own supposing; and is introduced *as a specimen* of the course which he and his Mixed Communion brethren would pursue on all such occasions.

*M.* Leaving *Mr. Hall* to defend himself,—(which, be assured, he is well able to do! )—let us proceed.—There is another, most lamentable inconsistency into which you are betrayed. You “acknowledge that many Pedobaptists stand high in the favor of God; enjoy intimate communion

with the Redeemer; and would, on their removal hence, be instantaneously admitted to glory—

S. Undoubtedly.

M. “Now, it seems the suggestion of common sense, that the greater includes the less, that they who have a title to the most sublime privileges of Christianity, the favor of God, the fellowship of Christ, and the hope of glory, must be unquestionably entitled to that ordinance whose sole design is to prepare us for the perfect fruition of these blessings. To suppose it possible to have an interest in the great redemption, without being allowed to commemorate it; that he may possess the substance who is denied the shadow; and though qualified for the worship of heaven, be justly debarred from earthly ordinances; is such an anomaly, as cannot fail to draw reprobation on the system of which it is the necessary consequence. Men will, ere long, tremble at the thought of being more strict than Christ, more fastidious in the selection of the members of the church militant, than he is in choosing the members of the church triumphant.”—[*Reasons*, 39, 40. H. 300.

S. This argument, my friend, so specious and so plausible, is generally advanced with such an air of confidence and triumph, as often to silence the opponent whom it fails to convince. It is, nevertheless, founded in misapprehension, and perfectly fallacious. In the first place, you misrepresent us. We *admit* that our brethren are entitled to the Lord's supper, inasmuch as all Christians are entitled to all the privileges of the Christian church. But it does not follow, that they are entitled to *deviate from the regulations prescribed by*

*the Founder of the feast.* He prescribed, on your own confession, that *baptism* should precede visible church fellowship. To say, then, that a Christian is absolutely entitled to any of the privileges peculiar to church fellowship prior to *baptism*, is taking leave of your friends, to dispute with the Christian Legislator; and there, my friend, I am perfectly willing to leave the decision of *that* point. But, besides this absolute title of all Christians to all the privileges of the Christian church, *in the way and order prescribed by the Christian Legislator*, we admit that sincere and conscientious Pedobaptists, *as such*, are, in an inferior sense, justly entitled to the Lord's supper, inasmuch as they believe they *have* complied with the prior obligation; and all men are under a sacred obligation to act on their own belief. Consequently, this eloquent appeal in justification of *the title* of our Pedobaptist brethren to the "earthly ordinances," and the insinuations that we *deny* them the privilege, might have been spared. On this point all parties are agreed, except in one particular. You contend, that, in relation to baptism and the Lord's supper, they are entitled to *invert* "the prescribed order" of the institutions; *they* contend that they are *not*. In relation to faith and baptism, you both *change sides*; while *we*, at least consistently, plead for the strict observance of our Lord's commission, in all its requirements, and all *in their "prescribed order."* When either of you can show that the legislator has granted *permission* to waive a compliance with his injunctions, or, on any pretence, to invert the order,—however mysterious such a permission may appear,—we



shall bow to his new authority with the most profound reverence. But, in the absence of such a singular document, it appears, to our simple, uninspired judgments, that while our Lord continues faithful to the *promise* he has graciously annexed to the commission—to be with his church—(which will be “*always, to the end of the world,*”)—so long he expects, and has a right to expect, that his church shall be faithful to the commission he united with the promise—faithful alike to the *duties* he has enjoined, and to the *order* in which he has commanded that these duties shall be observed. Surely, my friend, it is one thing to admit that all Christians are entitled to all the privileges of the Christian church in *obedience* to the Christian commission; and quite another thing to contend that they are entitled to them in *deviation* from it:—it is one thing also, to allow that, in an inferior sense, “sincere and conscientious” Pedobaptists are entitled to such a reception of the Lord’s supper as is in their opinion in agreement with “the prescribed order;” and a very different thing indeed, to assert that equally “sincere and conscientious” Baptists, who believe the very reverse, are entitled to *unite* with them. *They* believe they have entered the visible church by Christian baptism, and act accordingly. We believe they have not, and ought to act accordingly. Their Christianity is indubitable: But what then? Will the Christianity of individuals justify churches, as such, in deviating from the order of their Lord’s commission? The fallacy of your reasoning consists in confounding things that differ. You take it for granted, that the rule of admission into the church militant and the church

triumphant is *one and the same rule*—a position, perpetually asserted and assumed, but totally incapable of proof. In the admission of members to the celestial church, Christ acts as a *Sovereign*: in the admission of members to Christian churches on earth, we must act as *servants*—yielding implicit, undeviating obedience to the directions of our Sovereign Lord. To reproach us with being “more fastidious in the selection of the members of the church militant, than Christ is in choosing the members of the church triumphant,” may be applauded as an unanswerable argument, by those who are less attentive to sense than to sound—to reason, than to the charms of eloquence. Could you reproach us with being more strict, more fastidious, in the selection of our members, than the commission of Christ *requires* us to be, there would be some justice in the rebuke: at present there is none; and it may better become *those* to “tremble,” who are *less* strict, *less* fastidious, than their Lord’s commission, and who wish to receive members into their churches in a way which Christ *never authorized*.

*M.* But if the absence of baptism disqualify for a participation of the eucharist, as *one* of the “all things” which Christ commanded to be observed, must it not equally disqualify for the observance of *every other* duty comprehended in the same expression?

*S.* Certainly not. From our Lord’s commission we infer, 1. That baptized believers are to be instructed to observe “*all things whatsoever*,” which Christ has commanded. 2. That others are *not* to be instructed to observe *all* things, but only *such* things as are their duty *irrespective of church-*

*membership.* And what inconsistency there is in this conclusion, I cannot imagine.

*M.* But “if it once be admitted, that the clause on which so much stress is laid, is not to be interpreted so as absolutely to exclude unbaptized Christians from the *whole* of its import, to what purpose is it alleged against their admission to the eucharist? or how does it appear that this may not be one of the parts in which they are comprehended?”—[*Terms*, 45. *H.* 42.]

*S.* Because the Lord’s supper is a *church* ordinance: and there is a *peculiar* connexion between baptism and church fellowship. To attempt any elaborate proof of this position, must be perfectly unnecessary; since, whoever else may dispute it, it is presumed, that, on reflection, *you* will not; it being a position, *clearly recognized, deliberately avowed, and PARTIALLY reduced to practice*, by your eloquent friend himself, between whose opinion and your own, it were a libel to suppose there existed a single shade of difference! Perhaps we may now dismiss this branch of the inquiry—What shall we consider at our next interview?

*M.* The argument derived from *Apostolic Precedent*, if you please—a point, on which I think the advocates of strict communion have greatly miscalculated their strength.

*S.* Well—“to the law and the testimony.” If our sentiments will not bear that scrutiny, they cannot be true, and ought to be abandoned.

## CONVERSATION IV.

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THE EXAMPLE OF THE APOSTLES IN THEIR OBE-  
DIENCE TO THEIR LORD'S COMMISSION, AN IN-  
SPIRED EXPLANATION OF THEIR LORD'S WILL;  
AND A PATTERN, INTENDED FOR THE IMITA-  
TION OF THE CHURCH IN ALL SUCCEEDING  
AGES.

## ANALYSIS.

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The killing influence of a literal imitation of apostolic obedience to the Christian commission! The spirit and principle by which the apostles were governed. Important errors in the first churches. That none are recorded on baptism, an argument for the clearness of the law. We possess an accumulation of evidence, which the first churches could not possess. Baptists do not monopolize a single means of forming a right judgment. That may be conscientious, which is not involuntary. Many who are sincere in their profession, believe without personal examination of the only certain evidence. The tendency of Pedobaptism to produce this result. Robert Robinson and the innocence of error. Baxter's noble remonstrance, and strange inconsistency. Mixed churches not Baptist churches. Modern Pedobaptists in the same predicament as their predecessors. Anticipation of the speedy extinction of the last spark of Baptist evidence! A friendly challenge. Baxter and other eminent Pedobaptists 'avowed their conviction of one system, and acted upon another.' Consequently, Mr. Hall could not, without violating his own pretensions, have received them to his communion; and on *him*, therefore, the odium rests, which, for the theoretical rejection of the very same men, he casts upon *us*. All Christians not entitled, but under a sacred obligation to receive the Christian ordinances, in the order of Divine appointment. A strict adherence to the discipline of the church, as "prescribed by Christ and his apostles," the duty of Christian churches in reference to positive and perpetual regulations, regardless of *new cases*. Apostolic obedience to their Lord's commission, not to be classed with their mere local and temporary actions. Inspired precedents of thought! The apostles evidently *thought* faith should precede baptism, and baptism church fellowship. And, had *such* Pedobaptists as our brethren appeared in their day, we venture to *think* that they would have *thought* they were unbaptized believers, and have acted on their previous *inspired thoughts*. That the apostles would have made a *correspondent* difference in their treatment of the sincere and insincere, and that they would have made *such* a difference as that for which Mixed Baptist plead, two very different propositions. The insinuation, that they would in *any case*, the most conscientious and involuntary, recommend a deviation from the Christian commission, a libel on their fidelity. The apostolic injunctions on ministers and churches, equally binding on our ministers and our churches. Specimen. Apostolic Recantation, in favour of mixed communion. Schism.

## CONVERSATION IV.

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*M.* *Apostolic Precedent* is, I think, the subject appointed for this evening's Conversation.

*S.* It is; and while we appeal to our Lord's commission as our primary authority, we consider the example of the apostles an important auxiliary, both as an inspired explanation of the law, and a pattern of obedience evidently intended for our imitation.

*M.* But "precedent derived from the practice of inspired men is to be regarded as *law*, in exact proportion as the *spirit* of it is copied, and the *principle* on which it proceeds is acted upon. If, neglectful of these, we attend to the *letter* only, we shall be betrayed into the most serious mistakes."—"The letter killeth, (says St. Paul,) the spirit giveth life."—[*Reasons*, 8, 12. *H.* 286, 288.]

*S.* Well, I am astonished! The letter killeth! It must, indeed, be confessed, that this is a *literal*, or nearly a literal quotation from the apostle Paul; but a more glaring *perversion* of words is scarcely conceivable. The letter killeth! *What* letter, my friend? The letter of *New-Testament* ordinances? Alas! alas! In what a deplorable condition, then,

must *they* be, who, month after month, and year after year, *literally* celebrate the *Lord's supper* ! True—the letter killeth : but *what* letter ? A literal imitation of apostolic obedience, in relation to their Lord's commission ? O that the whole world were involved in *such* a massacre ! But, my good friend, if, as you say, “the example of the apostles is to be regarded as *law*, in proportion as the *spirit* of it is copied, and the *principle* from which it proceeds is acted upon ;” then their example, in requiring that all believers should be baptized previous to external church fellowship, *must* be law ; for, by what spirit and what principle *could* they have been actuated, but a spirit and principle of *profound regard for their Lord's injunctions* ?

*M.* But “there are a thousand actions recorded of the apostles, in the government of the church, which it would be the height of folly and presumption to imitate.”—[*Reasons*, 8. *H.* 286.]

*S.* If there were ten thousand, what then ? Unless, indeed, their strict adherence to the order of their Lord's commission were *one* of such actions : which it would be “the height of presumption” to affirm.

*M.* “The apostles, it is acknowledged, admitted none to the Lord's supper, but such as were previously baptized : but under what circumstances did they maintain this course ? It was at a time, when a mistake respecting the will of the Supreme Legislator on the subject of baptism was impossible : it was while a diversity of opinion relating to it could not possibly subsist,

because inspired men were at hand, ready to remove every doubt, and satisfy the mind of every honest inquirer.”—[*Reasons*, 8. H. 286.]

S. Certainly, we have no intimation of a diversity of opinion on the subject of baptism, during the ministry of the apostles. But to say that a mistake on this subject was *impossible*, is to assert more than can be proved. It was not impossible for the Corinthians awfully to pervert *the Lord's supper*, nor to entertain the most erroneous notions concerning *the resurrection*. It was not impossible for the church at Rome, and the churches of Galatia, to depart from the simplicity of the doctrine of *justification by faith*. Why, then, should it be thought a thing “impossible,” that a mistake should subsist on the subject of *baptism*?

M. “The instructions of the apostles were too plain to be mistaken, and their authority too sacred to be contemned by a professor of Christianity, without being guilty of daring impiety. In such a state of things, it may be asked, how could they have acted differently from what they did?”—[*Reasons*, 9. H. 286.]

S. And yet, on some subjects, either their instructions were not sufficiently plain, or their authority was not sufficiently sacred, or (which appears to me, a much more rational conjecture,) these inspired men were not always “*at hand*,” to prevent very important errors on some of the doctrines of Christianity. On *some* points, there evidently existed, from some cause or other, the most erroneous conceptions. But if, my friend, as you affirm, their instructions on baptism *were* too plain to be mistaken, what has rendered them less plain now? Why should not the written



law be as explicit and as binding, as the law verbally delivered? If the apostles were inspired, when they first opened their commission, and acted upon it, were they less inspired when, for our guidance, they committed it to writing? Had the first churches the law? So have we. Had they the example of the apostles? It is recorded, by inspired penmen, for our instruction. Were distant churches favored with apostolic epistles? These epistles, by a special providence, have been preserved and perpetuated, a precious boon, for the guidance and consolation of the Christian church, in every successive age, and under every changing scene, till time shall be no longer. We possess, in fine—in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles—an *accumulation of evidence*, which no Christian, in the first age of the church, could possibly enjoy.

*M.* But “the most rigid Baptist will probably admit, that, however clear and irresistible the evidence of his sentiments may appear to himself, there are those whom it fails to convince, and some of them at least, illustrious examples of piety; men, who would tremble at the thought of deliberately violating the least of the commands of Christ, or of his apostles.”—[*Reasons*, 11. H. 287.]

*S.* But *why* are they not convinced? Is the failure, think you, in the evidence, or in themselves? You will scarcely admit, I presume, that the evidence which the Divine Spirit has supplied, is, in itself, insufficient. If it be, unquestionably our Pedobaptist brethren are not only blameless, but worthy of commendation; for who can require faith and obedience, without sufficient evidence of

the nature and obligation of the supposed duty? But, on this hypothesis, *our own faith* is invalidated; and, with all our pretensions, we shall stand convicted of the supreme folly of believing without sufficient evidence! The evidence either *is* sufficient, or it is *not*. If it is *not*, how came *you*, my friend, to be convinced? If it *is* sufficient, how is it *our brethren* are not convinced? Have we the commission? So have they. Have we, in the practice of the apostles, an inspired explanation of that law? So have they. Have we the assistance of the learned? So have they. Finally, Have we a capacity for judging? It were a libel to breathe any other response than—*So have they*. In short, we do not monopolize a single privilege; we do not possess a single advantage peculiar to themselves. Then *why* are they not convinced?

*M.* It is sufficient for me, that they are *not* convinced; and surely you will allow that their error is "*involuntary and conscientious*."

*S.* My friend, I can readily concede, that our Pedobaptist brethren are *sincere* and *conscientious*; but I am not prepared to allow that their error is, in every sense, *involuntary*. That may be conscientious, which is not involuntary. Multitudes, who believe what they profess, and who are, therefore, conscientious, might believe otherwise, and probably would, if, in the investigation of Divine truth, they would be satisfied with the evidence supplied by the Divine Spirit. But if they *will* desert the only infallible oracle, and inquire of those whose highest pretensions are ambiguous, uncertain, and uninspired; their *sincere*

conviction, under such a *wilful* choice of inferior testimony, cannot, by the greatest stretch of charity, be denominated *involuntary*. Some, probably, of all religious communities, believe *without examination*, relying on the testimony of their minister, and of their intimate friends: others deem it indispensable to profess the sentiments of their immediate ancestors: the belief of a third class is regulated by feeling: while a fourth indolently assumes that the religion of the majority is infallibly true. These, and a multitude of inferior considerations, it is to be feared, induce a large proportion of the professing community—I do not say, to avow their conviction of what they do not *believe* to be the truth—but, unquestionably, to believe without *personal examination* of the only certain evidence.\* Now, the professions of such persons may be *sincere*; they actually believe what

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\* A shrewd reader may possibly wish to inquire, whether the writer intends to intimate that Pedobaptists are more accustomed than Baptists, to believe without personal examination? In reply, without intending any unkind reflection on his brethren, he would appeal to the common sense of his reader, and ask,—whether it is not the NATURAL TENDENCY of Pedobaptism to produce such a result? Who are *most* likely to “search the scriptures” on baptism—those who are taught, from their earliest youth, that they *have* been baptized? or those who have received no such impression, but who know they have *not* been baptized? Indeed, those persons must have had little intercourse with candid Pedobaptists, who are not familiar with such an avowal as this: ‘If I had not been baptized in my infancy, I should feel it my duty to *examine*: but as I have, and am now, I trust, a believer, and as the mode cannot be of consequence, I do not think it worth while, at my time of life, to harass and perplex my mind about it.’

they profess to believe; but their errors are not *involuntary*, in as much as they choose to believe without a personal examination of the only certain evidence. They might, and probably would believe otherwise, if, in imitation of the Bereans, instead of relying on any inferior testimony, they were to "search the scriptures" for themselves, and receive the inspired testimony "with all readiness of mind."\* It is not enough, my friend, that we act conscientiously, unless our consciences are enlightened by the word of God. Conscience itself may err. And a conscientious error cannot, by the utmost ingenuity, be converted into scripture truth; nor is a practice founded on that

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\* It is a little singular, that the liberal minded Robert Robinson, who advocated the cause of mixed communion on principles "more lax and latitudinarian" than Mr. Hall could approve; and who not only affirmed that Pedobaptism was an involuntary mistake, but whose favorite position was, the INNOCENCE OF ERROR, in relation to divine truth; should also have maintained, (in his *General Doctrine of Toleration*, &c. 42, 43,) that "the New Testament is utterly unacquainted with infant sprinkling;" that the "dipping of adults on their own personal profession of faith and repentance is plain; and that "the New Testament is a book so PLAIN, that any man of common sense might understand it IF HE WOULD." In the pulpit, he repeatedly inculcated this proposition; and, in the first of the volume of *Village Sermons*—(*The Christian Religion easy to be understood*,)—he amplifies and illustrates it with his characteristic ingenuity; prefacing his observations with this remarkable sentence:—"When I say all may understand it, I mean, IF THEIR OWN DEPRAVITY DOES NOT PREVENT IT." The consistency of this sentiment with the *involuntariness* and *innocence* of error, is not exactly, like the Christian religion,—"*easy to be understood*."

error, scriptural obedience. The truth is, that many of the most eminent Pedobaptists have candidly acknowledged, that the New Testament does not, by a single precept, or a single example, sanction the ceremony of infant baptism.—[See *Booth's Pedobaptism Examined*.]—This is true of Baxter, and Owen, and Leighton, and many besides, among the “myriads” of Pedobaptists, whom Mr. Hall is pleased to represent as sacrificed on the altar of our bigotry and intolerance. But surely it is not enough that they are conscientiously of opinion, for some reason or other, that Pedobaptism is lawful, while, at the same time, they avow their conviction that it is not sanctioned by Divine precept, or by apostolic example. On whatever evidence they have formed their conclusion, they are, on their own confession, without the sanction of the *best*, the *only certain* testimony—the appointment of the Christian Legislator, and the practice of his apostles. On this subject, Mr. Baxter himself presents us with a noble remonstrance, the *principle* of which will apply equally to baptism and church fellowship. “What man, (says he,) dare go in a way which hath neither *precept* nor *example* to warrant it, from a way that hath a full current of both?—Who knows what will please God but himself? And hath he not told us what he expecteth from us? Can that be obedience which hath no command for it? Is not this to accuse God’s ordinances of insufficiency? O the pride of man’s heart; that, instead of being a law-obeyer, will be a law-maker! and, instead of being true worshippers, will be worship-makers! For my part, I will

not fear that God will be angry with me for doing no more than he hath commanded me, and for sticking close to the rule of his word, in matters of worship.”—[*Plain Scripture Proof*, 24, 303.]—Now, how, with these views, acknowledging likewise, that “there is neither precept nor example in Scripture, of infant baptism,” this good man could be a Pedobaptist, is, to me, utterly inconceivable. Doubtless, he had his reasons—reasons, to himself satisfactory: but, that they *did* satisfy his conscience, and that they *should* have satisfied his conscience, are two very distinct propositions.

*M.* But surely you will not have the hardihood to impugn his Christianity!

*S.* Certainly not; but what then? Are we to violate the scriptural constitution of our churches, in deference to the erring consciences of persons, who substitute a ceremony confessedly unsanctioned by scripture precept or example, for a Christian ordinance which they acknowledge is so sanctioned, simply because they are Christians? Would not this indicate a greater regard for Christians than for Christ? Mr. Baxter’s sentiments on baptism were, *on his own showing*, precisely of this description.

*M.* But if a person, proposing himself “as a candidate for admission to a Baptist church,” were to confess that he was “not convinced of the divine authority of the rite which was administered to him in his infancy; and that, on mature deliberation and inquiry, he considered it as a human invention; and yet refused to confess Christ before men, by a prompt compliance with what he

is satisfied is a part of his revealed will; alleging that it is not essential to salvation, that it is a mere external rite, and that some of the holiest of men have died in the neglect of it;" Mr. Hall himself has "no hesitation in affirming, that such an individual is disqualified for Christian communion."—[*Reasons*, 12, 13. *H.* 288.]—But why do you smile?

*S.* Because, my friend, notwithstanding the tendency of your system, you instinctively cling to the once descriptive epithet—"a *Baptist* church;" whereas you must be well aware, that if your sentiments were universally prevalent, there would not be a single *Baptist* church in all Christendom! But *why*—(provided his Pedobaptist members did not out-vote him!)—would Mr. Hall reject such a person?

*M.* Because, "to receive him under such circumstances, would be sanctioning the want of principle, and pouring contempt on the Christian precepts."—[*Reasons*, 13. *H.* 288.]

*S.* Perhaps there are scarcely any Pedobaptists who would confess quite as much as your supposed candidate; nor among our coteremporaries, have any been found who acknowledge as much as their predecessors. But if modern Pedobaptists *have* found scripture precept or example for their practice, it follows that their predecessors conceded too much: if they have *not*, they concede too little. If they have, of course they can produce them; otherwise, whether they make the acknowledgment or not, they *are* in the same predicament as their forefathers: and their reception into our churches, under these circumstances,

would be, in my opinion, on our part, equally, "pouring contempt on the Christian precepts."

*M.* But "the evidence by which our views are supported, though sufficient for every practical purpose, is decidedly inferior to that which accompanied their first promulgation: the utmost that we can pretend, is a very high probability."—*[Reasons, I3. H. 288.]*

*S.* I am pleased, my friend, to hear you say that the evidence is "sufficient for every practical purpose;" because that is an acknowledgment that, in *your* opinion, Pedobaptism is not attributable to the want of *sufficient evidence*. But I am lost in astonishment and shame, that a Baptist should talk about the "decided inferiority" of the evidence in favor of his sentiments; and allege that supposed inferiority in extenuation of his mistaken brethren! On this hypothesis, the present "*very high probability*," may soon become *moderately high*; that again may dwindle to a *very humble probability*; and a few more gentle touches by the destroying wand of time, may reduce even that to a certain indistinct something—just a *possibility*; so dim, and obscure, and equivocal, that the rejection of *such* evidence, rather than its admission, may be the suggestion of reason! And, if the successive transitions proceed as rapidly as the descent from a superior elevation occupied by our eloquent friend in 1818, when *[Reply, Pref. xxiii. H. 153.]* he thought the evidence was "*overwhelming*," to his present humiliating position, the existing race of Baptists can scarcely hope to escape the mortification of



contemplating the dying embers, and of witnessing, with emotions more easily conceived than described, the extinction of the last "illustrious spark" of that evidence, which had been a faithful light to their pious ancestors for eighteen centuries! Nor shall we alone be affected. For, inferior or not, "overwhelming" or fast ebbing to a Lethean gulf, it may be well to consider, that it is the *only* certain evidence on the subject of baptism with which the church ever was, or ever will be favored. Consequently, if this be subject to decay and dissolution, we have nothing to do, but, one and all, Baptists and Pedobaptists, to convene a solemn assembly, elect some good Friend Barclay\* as our president, and, in profound stillness, muse on that which *was*, but which, alas for want of better evidence, hath vanished away! Nor is this all. For when the evidence of scripture on *this* subject is neutralized and dried up, what becomes of those evidences of the whole of Christianity derived from the inspired records?—But, *at present*, you admit that the evidence is "sufficient for every practical purpose." And so certain do I feel that our sentiments on baptism are *scriptural*, and that Pedobaptism is *not*, that I challenge the whole world to produce a single *scriptural* proof that it is of Divine appointment—whether of precept, example, or certain inference. The evidence for baptizing professing believers *only*, appears to me, as a few years ago it appeared to Mr. Hall—"overwhelming;" almost as clearly revealed as the way of salvation.

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\* An eminent writer, of the Society of Friends, born at Edinburgh, 1648. Editor.

*M.* But that may be clear to you, which is not clear to them; and “the apostles refused the communion of such, and such only, as were insincere, ‘who held the truth in unrighteousness,’ avowing their conviction of one system, and acting upon another; and wherever similar indications display themselves, we do precisely the same.”—[*Reasons*, 13, 14. *H.* 288.]

*S.* Indeed! Far be it from me to say, that the pious Richard Baxter “held the truth in unrighteousness,” in the worst acceptance of the phrase; but that he “avowed his conviction of one system and acted upon another,” is as clear as the sun in the firmament. And, consequently, you could not, without violating your own pretensions, have received *him* to your communion; nor any of those otherwise excellent men, who, on the same question, displayed, on their own showing, this glaring inconsistency: and yet where, on the whole, you will find better men, either in your own, or in any other denomination, I am at loss to conceive.\*

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\* It will be obvious, to the attentive reader, that, on his own principle, of rejecting those who “avow their conviction of one system, and act upon another,” Mr. Hall *must* have refused to admit these good men to communion: and, consequently, that on *himself* will rebound all the odium and criminality, with which, for the theoretical rejection of the very same men, he unsparingly loads his Strict Communion brethren.—[*Terms*, 133, 135. *Reply*, 124, 265.] The writer freely concedes that he has pursued this inquiry, into the inconsistency of these eminent Pedobaptists, much farther than the general argument required: and it was only in a deference of the plea of his Mixed Communion brethren, that he noticed it at all. But the

*M.* But the Pedobaptists of the present day are “restrained from following our example by deference to the will of God.”—[*Reasons*, 17. *H.* 50.]

*S.* Or, rather, by deference to what they *presume* is the will of God; for surely you do not mean to affirm that the ceremony they call infant baptism *is* the will of God! But they could not even suppose it is the will of God, but upon the assumption that *that* is his will which he has not revealed; and that they are at liberty to celebrate, as a Christian ordinance, a ceremony for which the ablest among them cannot produce a single precept or example, or even a certain inference, from the Christian scriptures.

*M.* Still you admit that they are Christians: and “the apostles never give the slightest intimation of the possibility of possessing the inward and spiritual grace, without being entitled to the outward sign. The assertion of such an opinion, and the practice founded upon it, is a departure from the precedent and example of the earliest

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truth is, that, were every Pedobaptist in the world as sincere and conscientious in maintaining his error, as the most sincere and conscientious Baptist that could be selected, is, in maintaining the truth, and were the error as involuntary as it is represented, this would not in the slightest degree affect our system; since the principle on which we act, is—not that our Pedobaptist brethren are *culpable* in their faith and practice—(that depends on circumstances.)—but that, while they are in our estimation *unbaptized*, our union with them in *church fellowship*, would be, on *our* part, a manifest deviation from the mind of Christ, as expressed in his memorable commission to the eleven apostles.

age, which it would be difficult to parallel.”—*[Reasons, 16. H. 290.]*

S. And what then? *We* are not chargeable with “the assertion of such an opinion,” nor is our “practice founded upon it.” On the contrary, we assert, not only that the possession of the thing signified *entitles* its possessor to the sign; but also, that being so qualified, he is under an *obligation* to receive it. He who is sanctified and redeemed, is not only *entitled* to the symbols of sanctification and redemption, but is under *a sacred obligation* to be baptized, and to celebrate the Lord’s supper: but then, it is equally imperative that he should receive *both* these ordinances, and each *in the order in which Christ appointed they should be received*.

M. But “the discipline of the church, as prescribed by Christ and his apostles, is founded on principles applicable to every age, and to every combination of events to which it is liable, in a world replete with change, where new forms of error, new modes of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth, are destined to follow in rapid and unceasing succession. Among these, we are compelled to enumerate the prevailing notions of the Christian world on the subject of baptism—an error, which, it is obvious, could have no subsistence during the age of the apostles. Here, then, arises a *new case*, and it becomes a matter of serious inquiry, how it is to be treated. It plainly cannot be decided by reference to apostolic precedent, because nothing of this kind then existed, or could exist.”—*[Reasons, 18. H. 290.]*

S. My friend, when you can show that Christians did not fall into *any* error in the apostolic age, then you may with some plausibility assert that *this* error could not exist. But while we know that they fell into gross doctrinal error, and awfully perverted the Lord's supper, this favorite position of yours will not be received as an "obvious" truth. That they *did not* fall into this error, as far as our information extends, furnishes an additional testimony to the clearness of the law; for it would be absurd to suppose that the apostles were always present, to solve every rising difficulty in the minds of the first Christians. But the law is the same now as ever, and the authority of the New Testament is surely tantamount to that of the apostles and evangelists—it being, in fact, identically their own testimony. We are obliged to you, my friend, for conceding that "the discipline of the church is prescribed by Christ and his apostles;" because, being once satisfied of that, we shall take the liberty of adhering to it, in reference to a positive and perpetual law, regardless of any "new form of error," or any "new mode of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth." The question on which we are at issue, is plainly this:—Whether the constitution and discipline of our churches shall be conformed to the commission of Christ; or whether a strict adherence to that law of the Christian church shall occasionally be waived in deference to the erroneous notions of Christians? *Your* opinion has been distinctly avowed. *Our* opinion is, that the Christian commission is immutable in its order no less than in its requirements, and of peremp-

tory obligation as long as the promise attached to it remains in force—" *always, to the end of the world :*" and, consequently, that we are *not* at liberty to deviate from it, in compliment to "new forms of error," or "new modes of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth." You say, the present case cannot be decided by a reference to apostolic precedent: but this is neither more nor less than saying, that though the apostles, in the admission of church members, were under an obligation to adhere uniformly to the matter and order of their Lord's commission, modern Baptists, in the admission of members to *their* churches, are at liberty to deviate from either or both! It is freely admitted, that some particular actions of the apostles originated in the particular circumstances under which they were called to act, and were not attributable to any express injunction of the Christian Legislator; and *these* precedents, of course, are imperative on us, only in proportion as we are similarly situated. But their uniform practice of baptizing only believers, and of receiving to church fellowship baptized believers only, may not be confounded with *such* precedents, being clearly referrible to the Christian commission. Their conduct, in relation to the Christian ordinances, was doubtless *congenial* with existing circumstances; but to say that it *originated* in those circumstances, is to ascribe it to an inferior and variable cause, during the co-existence of a cause infinitely superior and immutable—a mode of reasoning, unphilosophical in itself, and alike dishonorable to Christ and his apostles. The will of the Christian Legislator is surely a weightier con-

sideration than circumstances; and with the apostles, was, doubtless, more influential. But his injunctions are as binding on modern Baptist ministers, little or great, as they were on the apostles; and, whatever may be said of their local and circumstantial actions, their unbending, undeviating obedience to their Lord's commission is a precedent, an example, which it is incumbent on *every* Christian church, in *every* age, and under *every* combination of circumstances, punctiliously to imitate; regardless of *any* of those "new forms of error, and new modes of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth," which you tell us are "destined to follow in rapid and unceasing succession."

M. But, "if action be founded on conviction, as it undoubtedly is, in all well regulated minds, we are as much obliged to mould our sentiments into an agreement with those of the apostles, as our conduct; inspired precedents of *thought* are as authoritative as those of *action*."—[*Reasons*, 19. H. 291.] You smile at this, my friend; but I assure you I am serious.

S. But, my dear friend, where are these said "*precedents of thought*" to be found? Not being recorded for our instruction, we are obliged to infer what they were from inspired precedents of action. But the uniform *actions* of the apostles lead us to infer that they *thought* faith ought to precede baptism, and that baptism ought to precede church fellowship.

M. "But if we should *treat* all Pedobaptists exactly as the apostles would have treated unbaptiz-

ed persons in their day, must we not, for the same reason, *think* the same of them?"—[*Reasons*, 19. H. 291.]

S. Undoubtedly, my friend, we *should* think of modern Pedobaptists as the apostles would have thought of *exactly such* unbaptized persons in their day, who, notwithstanding their erroneous sentiments on the subject of baptism, exhibited as clear and satisfactory proofs of Christianity as our contemporaries. It is reasonable to conclude, that if *just such* persons had existed in their time, they would have *thought* they were unbaptized Christians, and have *treated* them as such ; that while they must unquestionably have recognized their Christianity, they would not, in a single iota, have *deviated from the law of Christ* in deference to their erroneous notions. The supposition of there having been such, or any other Pedobaptists, is merely hypothetical, introduced in deference to your novel notion of *inspired precedents of thought*. As there are no thoughts of this description recorded, we cannot speak with certainty ; but it commends itself to our simple, uninspired judgments, that it is imperative on us both to *think* of people and to *act* towards them, agreeably to what they *are*, or appear to be. Consequently, it is incumbent on us to *think* our Pedobaptist brethren are Christians, and to *treat* them as such ; and to think they are unbaptized, and treat them as such ; regulating our thoughts and our actions, in both instances, by the laws of Christ—one of which is, that we are to judge of men by their fruits ; the other, that believers are to be baptized



before they are instructed to observe "all things" which Christ has commanded. Agreeably to the first of these laws, we judge that our Pedobaptist friends are Christians, and should rejoice to receive them to church fellowship ; but, agreeably to the second, we require that they shall be received in the way, and the only way of Christ's appointing. Seriously, my friend, I am of opinion, that neither our *thoughts*, nor our *actions*, towards sincere and conscientious Pedobaptists, vary from what would have been the thoughts and the actions of the apostles, if *precisely such* unbaptized persons had appeared in their day.

M. But "the difference is immense, between a conscientious mistake of the mind of Christ, on a particular subject, and a deliberate contempt or neglect of it. Who can doubt that the apostles would be the first to feel this distinction ; and, as they would undoubtedly, in common with all conscientious persons, regulate their conduct by their sentiments, that, could they be personally consulted, they would recommend a correspondent difference of treatment ?"—[*Reasons*, 20. H. 291.]

S. Undoubtedly, "they would recommend a *correspondent* difference of treatment ;" but that they would recommend *such* a difference as that for which *you* contend, is not quite so clear. A deviation from *the law of Christ*, in deference to the mistakes of Christians, however conscientious, would indicate a greater regard for the erring servant, than for the infinitely wise and supreme Lord. In all probability, could the apostles be personally consulted, they would recommend *just*

*such a difference* as that which *we* observe. While they must have considered a “deliberate contempt or neglect” of the mind of Christ as invalidating the Christian pretensions of the party, and have acted accordingly; they would have allowed, we presume, that a sincere error, though not entirely involuntary, was compatible with Christianity; and if they could not have produced a conviction of the truth, doubtless they would have treated the party as an erring Christian, and have recommended, as in the case of a member of the church at Thessalonica, who walked not according to their commandment, that while the church should “withdraw themselves” from such a person, they should “yet not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” It is not pretended, that the cases are *precisely* similar; the one being a moral, the other a ritual dereliction; the suspension of the former from church fellowship having been designed as an expression of disapprobation, and the non-recognition of Christians as church members without baptism being intended solely as an act of obedience on our part to the order of our Lord’s commission. But they are sufficiently similar, to exhibit all that is desired: *viz.* an *example* of treating a Christian “as a brother,”—*without* the joint participation of those exercises which are peculiar to church fellowship. This is the course *we* pursue. And to say that the apostles would, in *any* case, recommend a *deviation from the law of Christ*, is a libel on their Christian fidelity. Assuredly, nothing so derogatory to their character can be found in the inspired record of their

actions, or in their equally inspired epistles. What they addressed to the churches, they had previously "received of the Lord," not in relation to one ordinance only, but to both; and likewise to the order in which the relative duties of faith and baptism and church fellowship should be observed. To the order of their Lord's commission, as a whole, they invariably required implicit submission; nor is it possible, without manifest injustice, to imagine for a moment, that their uniform adherence to this course of action, originated, not in a profound regard for their Lord's expressed will, but in submission to "circumstances;" or to insinuate that, had these "circumstances" varied, not only would they have observed a *correspondent* difference, but that *that* difference would have consisted in an abandonment of the "prescribed" order of their Lord's commission. No! we hear not a word about the law being binding in some cases, and not in others; not a syllable, about accommodating it to "new forms of error," or of waiving it in compliment to "new modes of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth;" not a breath in favor of a certain fashionable distinction between essentials and non-essentials. And, besides *their own* rigid adherence to one straight line of simple obedience, their epistles abound in exhortations to *the churches*, to "keep the ordinances as they were delivered." And as these exhortations were principally addressed to ministers and churches, *as such*, they must be equally binding on us, not merely as individuals, but in our official capacity, *as Christian ministers*

*and Christian churches.\** Nor will it avail to reply, that these exhortations have not a special reference to *baptism*; since it is evident they have a special relation to the duties of churches generally, of which scriptural administration of baptism is by no means the least interesting or important;

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\* To the ROMANS, the apostle Paul writes: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned."

To the CORINTHIANS, in his first Epistle, he writes: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." "I beseech you, be followers of me. For this cause have I sent Timotheus, my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, as I teach every where, in every church." "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ. Now, I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them to you." "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

To the PHILIPPIANS, he writes: "Brethren, be ye followers together of me; and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample."

To the COLOSSIANS, he writes: "Though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying, and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

while some of them related to temporary customs, inferior to any command whatever of perpetual obligation. How any person, who is familiar with the Epistles, and observes with what particularity and reiteration *churches as such* are urged to obey and to require obedience to the injunctions of

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To the THESSALONIANS, he writes: "We beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you, by the Lord Jesus." "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle." "We have confidence in the Lord, touching you, that ye both do, and will do, the things which we command you." "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

To TIMOTHY, he writes: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing, have erred concerning the faith." "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus." "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, &c—Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

To TITUS also, he writes: "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God—holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers: for there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision. Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; not giving

Christ, as exemplified by his apostles, can yet deliberately believe that if the apostles could now be consulted, they would recommend a *deviation* from the matter and order of that commission which they uniformly enforced, and thus impugn and nullify their own solemn injunctions, sur-

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heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."

And even the affectionate apostle JOHN, who, more than any other, might be supposed to be carried away by *feeling*, writes in nearly the same strain. In his first Epistle, he informs those to whom he wrote: "By this we know that we love the children of God—when we love God, and keep his commandments: for this is the love of God—that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." In his second Epistle, addressed to a Christian matron, he says; "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." Thus, so far from a rigid adherence to the commands of Jesus Christ indicating the *absence* of love, the most affectionate of all the apostles represents such a scrupulous adherence to them, as the very criterion and *evidence* of that Christian grace.

The apostle JUNE also, in his general Epistle, exhorted those to whom he wrote, that they should "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints."

And it is worthy of remark, that two of the seven Asiatic churches, those at PERGAMOS and THYATIRA, were reprov'd, not so much for an individual participation in erroneous doctrine, as for tacitly allowing it in their respective communities.

passes all conception. Such a recommendation, if we could suppose it possible, should be entitled—

THE  
RECANTATION OF THE APOSTLES,

OR

*A Modern Explanation of their inspired Injunctions  
to the Primitive Churches.\**

For, if the apostles would now recommend a deviation from their example, they *must* contradict their own epistles, they *must* revoke their former

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\* In the absence of the *real* Recantation, (for which all Mixed Baptists are in duty bound to make diligent search,) the following, if not in exact agreement with the *letter*, may, perhaps, be received as a free imitation of the *spirit* of that most singular document. And should the reader experience a momentary emotion of wonder, at perceiving certain *quotations*, he has only to imagine—(and what can be less romantic? or to the author, more honorable?)—that the apostles have read and approved the publications from which they are transcribed.

*To the Churches of the Nineteenth and successive Centuries, the Apostles, in this their Epistle Extraordinary, send greeting :*

WHEREAS it has come to our knowledge, that, in these latter days, there are certain Christians, who are conscientiously of opinion, that, though they cannot discover a single scripture precept or example of infant sprinkling, yet they are, for certain other reasons, justified in substituting that ceremony for a Christian ordinance, which they acknowledge *is* commanded, and of which numerous examples *are* recorded in the New Testament.

AND WHEREAS it has also come to our knowledge, that certain other Christians, under a pretence of adherence to the Christian commission, and of imitating our

injunctions, they *must* nullify the whole course of their actions ; and thus be guilty of the most astonishing *felo de se* ever perpetrated.

*M.* But, as you are such an advocate for a rigid adherence to apostolic precedent, allow me

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example, and of keeping the ordinances as we delivered them to the primitive churches—(thereby calculating upon our commendation!)—do pertinaciously refuse to unite with their erroneous, though confessedly Christian brethren, in church fellowship:—

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That when we commended the churches for keeping the ordinances as they were delivered, and enjoined on them an exact imitation of our uniform obedience to the Christian commission, and exhorted them to be followers of us, as we had followed Christ—we did not *intend* to regulate the conduct of churches in successive ages of the world ; but only the affairs of those which were planted by our own instrumentality, or which existed during our personal ministry. Our authority, (except in granting dispensations, and rebuking “schismatics,” and “narrow minded bigots,”) terminated with our lives.

BE IT THEREFORE KNOWN TO YOU, That in future, the law of Christ is to be accommodated to “circumstances,” to “new forms of error,” and “new modes of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth ;” and that, henceforth, no church is under an obligation to require obedience to the laws of Christ, if any Christian, applying for admission, be conscientiously of opinion, either that he *has* obeyed them, or that it is not *his duty* to obey them ; although it shall be clear to such a church that he has *not*, and that such obedience *is* his duty. THAT IS TO SAY, Your conduct as a church, as well as his individually, must be regulated, not by *your own* views—(whether of faith, of baptism, or of church fellowship,)—but by *his* ; and consequently, (to apply this “general rule” this “broad principle,” this “maxim of universal application,” to a particular case,) if *he* believe he is baptized, though *you* believe he is not, not only is he at liberty to think and act for himself, without being amenable



to remind you how grossly you depart from it. By a formal separation from true Christians, you divide the true church, and are guilty of *schism*—a sin against which the apostles most earnestly inveighed.

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to you—(a position, we believe, which you never disputed.)—but you, in deference to his sincerity, must receive him to church fellowship *without* baptism—his alleged unconscious obedience being equivalent to actual obedience. True, *we* never acted on this principle except in relation to matters of indifference: but what then? *We* were inspired, and *we* could work miracles. How strange, then; it is, that it should never have occurred to you—and that now your brethren suggest so rational a position, ye will not believe—that, no sooner did any doubt arise in the mind of any convert, on the subject of baptism, than, wherever either party might have been an hour before, we were instantly “at hand,” to solve every difficulty, and remove every doubt! Before, therefore, you presume to imitate the *letter* of our example, even in our punctilious obedience to our Lord’s commission, do take into serious consideration the prodigious difference of *circumstances*, in that age and this.

Now, THEREFORE, The errors of Christians, not only in relation to abrogated Jewish rites, and things indifferent, as aforetime, but also in relation to a perpetual law of Christ, must be accommodated; and you must relax the rigid, bigotted, and intolerant customs of your forefathers, and also of your own selves; and adopt the mild, and gentle, and persuasive law of liberality and candor. The Christian commission was not intended to be kept inviolably: it is to be obeyed or not, just as “weak brethren” may decide. *Sincerity* is every thing. In future, therefore, you must not be so *strict* in requiring men to believe and obey the truth: it is quite sufficient that they practise what they believe. And if what they practise be in their judgment right, on whatever evidence they have come to that conclusion, or if without evidence—still, not

S. My friend, the question is, Do we separate from our Christian brethren? or, Do they separate from us? And the answer to this inquiry involves another—Whose churches are constituted on the apostolic pattern?—theirs, or ours? If *ours* be,

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only will God receive them, who is *not* subject to any law; but *you*, also, who *have* a rule of church fellowship, must receive them, just as if that rule had been burnt, and its ashes scattered by the four winds of heaven, at the destruction of Jerusalem—conscientious error being equivalent to truth, and a practice founded on that error, equivalent to Christian obedience.

NOW, THEREFORE, WE COMMEND, *not* those who *keep* the ordinances as we delivered them; but those who, in compliment to sincere error, are willing occasionally to invert the “natural and prescribed order of the Christian sacraments.” And we solemnly warn the rigid, strict adherents to the *letter* of our former injunctions, henceforward to pay no manner of deference whatever, either to our practice, or to the law on which that practice was founded, whenever such attention to either shall appear, to any respectable individual, “harsh and illiberal.”

WE, THEREFORE, PUBLISH TO ALL THE CHURCHES, —hereby revoking our former injunctions, save and except as shall be hereafter excepted—that, in future, our directions to keep the ordinances as they were delivered, are not binding. AND—(not now to provide for other innumerable diversities, from Popery downward)—WE RECOMMEND, for the sake of consistency, the publication of three editions of the New Testament: One for the use of the Strict Communion Pedobaptists, with such inferences and improvements as may be required: Another, with suitable variations, for the use of the Mixed Baptists: And a third, for the use of the Strict Baptists, *verbatim et literatim*: for upon *them individually*, the law of Christ and our former injunctions are still binding; because they *believe* so: But Baptist *churches* are exhorted to conform to “the genius of the age;” to receive to their

(which I confess is *my* opinion,) then *they*, and *not we*, are the schismatics. But this is a serious accusation, and a question of considerable importance: we will, therefore, if you please, defer any farther discussion until our next interview.

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communion, *without* baptism, all good men, of every faith; and thus show, to an admiring world, with what unparalleled generosity they can sacrifice their very existence as a community, in amiable condescension to the diversified "aberrations" of their sincere, "weak brethren." THAT IS TO SAY, Every *individual* of every church is to do right *in his own eyes*: but every *church*, as such, must *agree* to observe or to abandon, as *circumstances* may dictate, the regulations confessedly "prescribed" by their Sovereign Lord.

IF ANY PROFESSED CHRISTIAN apply for admission into your churches, whatever he may practise, or whatever he may neglect, so that he be *sincere*, you must receive him.

Seeing, therefore, that none of all the various kinds of professed Christians impose upon *you* any of their erroneous practices; and seeing that, whatever differences exist between you, you are of one mind with them all *in that identical particular in which they request to unite with you*, you must receive them all—THEY ARE ALL CONSCIENTIOUS.

¶ This to continue in force, until some "genius of the age," still more remote from the letter of the ancient precedent, may render it expedient to procure a new and more liberal dispensation.

## CONVERSATION V.

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A STRICT ADHERENCE IN THE CONSTITUTION OF  
OUR CHURCHES, TO THE LAWS OF CHRIST AS  
EXEMPLIFIED IN THE UNIFORM PRACTICE OF  
THE APOSTLES, NOT SCHISM, BUT CHRISTIAN  
UNION.

## ANALYSIS.

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Churches who adhere to the Christian model not guilty of schism. Misapplication of Paul's anti-schismatical address to the church at Corinth. Mixed churches necessarily schismatical, both in their constitution and experience. A Christian ordinance and a worldly ceremony ought not to coalesce. Thyatira and Pergamos. Mixed churches either compromise their peculiarities, or violate equally the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace. Four distinct parties: Strict and Mixed Baptists, and Strict and Mixed Pedobaptists. If the first are schismatics for maintaining the order of the Christian commission, so are the second and third, for they both maintain it in part. If the last are schismatics for abandoning this order, so are the second and third, for they both abandon it in part. We desire a church union with all Christians, on the principle of the Christian commission; but we cannot make a schism in the building, to accommodate them with a side entrance. Mixed communion a combination of the members against the Head, and productive of the identical schisms against which the apostle inveighs. Mixed churches a direct violation of the unity which Christ prayed might subsist among his disciples. One Lord, one faith, and one baptism, ought to characterize every Christian church. We rejoice in such a union as Christ did pray for; but cannot consent to an unscriptural alliance. No scriptural authority for the invidious distinctions instituted by Mixed Baptists between different Christian precepts. Undoubtedly, love is the cardinal grace; but where is it asserted, in the New Testament, that love means mixed communion? A new Test Act. Consequences of making mixed communion the test of love. Hints for a new translation. M. accuses us of not exhibiting external indications of esteem towards Pedobaptists. Mr. Hall reproaches us with inconsistency because we do! Christian communion not limited to the Lord's table. Christian precepts not to be classed with petty speculations and minute opinion. Perfect uniformity neither practicable nor important; but a uniformity in relation to the commands of Jesus Christ, of perpetual obligation, both practicable and imperative. Receiving the weak in the faith.

## CONVERSATION V.

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*M.* You are true to your engagement; and perhaps equally true to your cause.

*S.* I am: still, I hope there will be no alienation in our feelings. But I am concerned about this charge of *schism*, which you prefer against the advocates of strict communion.

*M.* Certainly, it appears to me, that, in formally and systematically separating yourselves from other Christians, you are chargeable with schism—with dividing the body of Christ.

*S.* But, as I intimated at the close of our last Conversation, the schismatics are those who separate from churches formed on THE CHRISTIAN MODEL. Undoubtedly, if *Pedobaptist* churches are constituted on the principles prescribed by Christ, and exemplified by the apostles, then we are, most unequivocally, *schismatics*—you, my friend, no less than ourselves; inasmuch as you voluntarily united yourself, not to a Pedobaptist, but to a Baptist church. Or, if *mixed communion* churches are thus sanctioned, then we and our Pedobaptist brethren must unite in humble confession. But if, as is in my opinion demonstrable, *strict Baptist* churches are the *only* churches whose constitution and practice agree with the rule of

church-fellowship prescribed by Christ, and strictly obeyed and enjoined by his apostles,—then, to whomsoever the charge is applicable, we cannot, by the utmost ingenuity, be convicted of this heinous sin. This reply, I humbly conceive, is of itself sufficient to repel the charge : but I shall be glad to hear any thing you may please to advance, in support of your allegation.

*M.* Thank you, my friend. You must admit, that “a schism in the mystical body of Christ is deprecated as the greatest evil, and whatever tends to promote it is subjected to the severest reprobation. ‘Now I beseech you, by the name of the Lord Jesus, (is the language of St. Paul,) that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. For it has been declared unto me by them who are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided ? was Paul crucified for you ? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul ?’”—[*Reasons*, 24. *H.* 293.]

*S.* Undoubtedly, my dear friend, I *must* admit, not only that schism is an enormous evil, but also that the apostle, in the passage you have quoted, deprecates it in terms of “the severest reprobation.” But what then ? This does not fix the sin on *us* ! Of all the texts you could possibly have selected for your purpose, this, it appears to me, is decidedly the most unfortunate ; being most unequivocally opposed to the system

for which you contend. Assuredly, the apostle exhorts the Corinthians—(and the exhortation is, we presume, equally applicable to *every* church,) —that the members should all “speak *the same* thing;” that there should be “*no divisions*;” that they should be “perfectly joined together in *the same* mind and in *the same* judgment.” But this, my friend, is an exhortation, to a compliance with which your *mixed* churches cannot, by any possibility, make the slightest pretensions. The exhortation (as far it extends,) *may* be obeyed by a Pedobaptist church, and by a Baptist church; but it is an injunction of which a *mixed* church is, in its very constitution, and of rigid necessity, a *palpable violation*: nor, in the whole range of scripture, are we presented with a more explicit and unequivocal interdict of those diversified communities. The only question necessary to be decided, lies between us and our Pedobaptist brethren: but whatever be the result, your churches can have neither part nor lot in the matter. The question for decision is—*In what* were the Corinthians to be of one mind? were they all to maintain mistaken, or correct sentiments? *What* were they all to speak? the mind of Christ, or human traditions? *What* judgment were they all to entertain? that which is uniformly dictated by the oracles of truth; or that which has no foundation in scripture or reason? Most assuredly, they were not to call any mere man Master—whether Paul, or Cephas, or Apollos; but they *were* to call *Christ* Master, who had been crucified for them, and in whose name they had all been baptized.



So far, then, from the passage under consideration militating *against* us, it is the very passage, of all others, which we should select, as containing the most unequivocal sanction of *Baptist* churches, and the most positive interdict of churches on the *mixed* principle. The apostle exhorts the church at Corinth to be of *one* mind, and that undoubtedly the mind of Christ: but *mixed* churches are, by special agreement, of *two* minds respecting the very first duty which Christ enjoins on his disciples; and, under pretence of promoting a unity of *feeling*, (than which, after all nothing can be more precarious,) you establish a "*division*" at the very entrance—one company entering in by the front-door of *Christ's* appointing—the others, by a private, side entrance, of *human* invention. Nor is this all. Other "*divisions*" follow in the train. Unless both parties agree to compromise their peculiar principles, each studiously avoiding the inculcation of that, which, if he be sincere, he considers a Christian precept, *your* churches, like the church at Corinth, will be the scene of contentions and internal schisms. One will say, I am a *Baptist*: another, I am a *Pedobaptist*: a third, I am for *neither*: a fourth, I am for *either*: or,—to secure the smiles of both "*God and Mammon*,"—*I am for BOTH!!* The additions to the church, too, instead of exciting one general feeling of satisfaction and delight, will create jealousies, as the numbers of either party may happen to preponderate. Thus you would systematically and unscripturally divide at the very entrance, and be perpetually exposed to internal jealousies, discords, and schism. It will be of no avail to

reply, that the common bond of love to Christ will prevent the exercise of these party feelings. That it *should* and that it *would*, are two very distinct propositions. Every attentive observer of human nature is aware that men are much more sensitive to that which divides them, than to that which unites them. But I am unwilling to concede, that the bond of love to Christ either *would* or *should* render it a matter of *indifference* to Christians, whether obedience to a command of Christ or the practice of a human invention, shall prevail in the church. In my humble opinion, obedience to a Christian ordinance, and the practice of a worldly ceremony, ought *not* to coalesce. Baptism is an ordinance of Christ; but Pedobaptism, yourself being judge, my friend, is *not* an ordinance of Christ, but a human tradition—worldly in its origin, worldly in its subjects, and worldly in its tendency. Now, these opposite institutions ought never to coalesce: they ought never to be performed in the same community. It will be of no avail to reply, that your Pedobaptist members do not impose upon *you* the observance of their ceremony, while the *church*, as a body, recognizes and practises two baptisms. You are responsible, not only as an isolated individual, but as a member of a community. As one of the church, you are accountable for the customs of the church; and though *individually* you do not practise Pedobaptism, yet if you *suffer it in your church*, you are exposed to the rebuke of Him who reprov'd the church at Thyatira, not for an open and avowed participation of false doctrine, but for *tacitly suffering it* in their com-

munity. It is worthy of remark, also, that while the church at Pergamos were commended because they held fast the name and faith of Christ, they were censured for *having among them* those who held fast false doctrine. A Christian should neither adopt, nor *suffer* in the church of which he is a member, the substitution of what he believes to be a human invention for a command of Jesus Christ. And, unless both parties consent to preserve an unworthy, an *unchristian* silence on the very first personal obligation of a believer, your *mixed* churches, instead of presenting an antidote, would be fruitful sources of the most baneful schism—not only a schism in practice, but an incurable alienation of affection—a violation, equally, of “the unity of the Spirit,” and of “the bond of peace.”

*M.* But allow me just to ask two questions. “First, Are our Pedobaptist brethren a part of the mystical body of Christ? or, in other words, Do they form a portion of that church which he has purchased by his precious blood?—You are loud in your professions of esteem for pious Pedobaptists, nor is there any thing you would more resent than a doubt of your sincerity in that particular. The persons whom you exclude from your communion are, then, by your own confession, a part of the flock of Christ, a portion of his mystical body, and of that church which he has bought with his blood. The next question is, Whether a formal separation from them, on the account of their imputed error, amounts to what the scripture styles *schism*? Supposing one part of the church at Corinth had formally severed themselves from

the other, and established a separate communion, allowing those whom they had forsaken, at the same time, the title of sincere Christians, would this have been considered as a *schism*? That it would, is demonstrable from the language of St. Paul, who accuses the Corinthians of having *schisms* σχίσματα among them, though they never dreamed of forming a distinct and separate communion. If they are charged with schism on account of that spirit of contention, and that alienation of their affections from each other, which merely tended to an open rupture, how much more would they have incurred that censure, had they actually proceeded to that extremity. —If there is any meaning in terms, this is *schism* in its highest sense.”—[*Reasons*, 25, 26. H. 293.]

S. That an open rupture is a *schism* is certain: but it does not follow that *we* are the schismatics. Suppose the church at Corinth had proceeded to an open separation, who would have sustained that odium? The party who *observed*, or the party who *abandoned* the regulations prescribed by the Christian Legislator? It is very far from grateful to my feelings, even by implication, to fix the charge of *schism* on any of my brethren, who, though decidedly erroneous, are sincere and conscientious. But on what principles *we* can be convicted of this heinous sin, I am totally at a loss to conceive. If those who *strictly adhere* to the order of their Lord's commission, notwithstanding the Christian character of their opponents, are chargeable with schism, then *you* are schismatics for insisting on the pre-

scribed order of faith and baptism; if, on the contrary, such an adherence to the order of the commission does not convict *you* of schism, how can a similar adherence to the same commission, in relation to the equally "prescribed" order of baptism and church fellowship, constitute *us* schismatics?—*You* require such a confession of faith as *you* believe is scriptural before *you* will admit any one to baptism. *We*, on the same principle, require such baptism as *we* believe is scriptural, before *we* receive any one to church fellowship. With a few modern exceptions, all Pedobaptists—whether Independents, or Presbyterians, or Episcopalians—do the same. Consequently, if *this* be schism, great is the company of the schismatics—the only "little flock," who can walk erect, and, with a bold front, and a firm step, and an unfaltering accent, declare, in the hearing of all Christendom, that *they* are not schismatics—being a modern sect of Mixed Communion Pedobaptists—a party who, with perfect consistency, deviate from the order of their Lord's commission *entirely*, baptizing without faith, and receiving members to church fellowship without baptism! They and the Strict Baptists, of course, occupy extreme positions; while between us, moving hither and thither, in busy succession, are seen a diversified crowd, constituting two distinct bodies—Mixed Communion Baptists, and Strict Communion Pedobaptists—each with his party banners. Both these parties are alternately here and there, with us and with our opponents, for each and against each, accusing both and defending both. Parading up and down, exulting in their

UNION, yet disagreeing entirely with each other, and dividing the Christian commission between them, (What a *schism*!) both *prove* that *we* are right, while both tacitly imply that they think our opponents right. Whenever we *baptize*, one party defends us with the first half of the commission, while the others are with our opponents—of course *without* that sanction: no sooner, however, are we engaged in *church fellowship*, than away start our Mixed Baptist friends to the opposite side of the camp—*without* the commission, of course; while their places are supplied by the Strict Communion Pedobaptists, with the other half of that important document.\* Now, my friend, we are

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\* BAXTER.—“What man dare go in a way which hath neither precept nor example to warrant it, from a way that hath a full current of both? Yet they that will admit members into the visible church without baptism do so.”—[*Plain Scripture Proof*. 24.]

WALL.—“No church ever gave the communion to any persons before they were baptized. Among all the absurdities that ever were held, none ever maintained *that*, that any person should partake of the communion before he was baptized.”—[*History of Infant Baptism*. Part II. Chap. IX.]

DODDRIDGE.—“It is certain, that as far as our knowledge of primitive antiquity reaches, no unbaptized person received the Lord’s supper. How excellent soever any man’s character is, he must be baptized before he can be looked upon as completely a member of the church of Christ.”—[*Lectures*, 511, 512.]

DWIGHT.—“It is an indispensable qualification for this ordinance, [the Lord’s supper,] that the candidate for communion be a member of the visible church of Christ, in full standing. By this I intend,—that he should be a person of piety; that he should have made a public profession of religion; and that he should have been baptized.”—[*System of Theology*, Sermon 160.]

not satisfied with these flying, transient visits : we wish for a permanent union with all of you on the principles of our Lord's commission. Whether, however, the Strict Communion Baptists, or the Mixed Communion Pedobaptists, are the *schismatics*, is a question between them and us. But whichever shall be convicted of schism, *your* case is deplorable indeed. For if *either* are schismatics, it inevitably follows—so ARE YOU. For example : Are *they* schismatics for *abandoning* the natural “and prescribed order” of faith and baptism and church fellowship, then *you* are guilty of schism ; for *you also* abandon this natural and prescribed order in relation to baptism and church fellowship. Or, Are *we* schismatics for *maintaining* “the natural and prescribed order” of faith and baptism and church fellowship, still *you* are guilty of schism ; for *you likewise* maintain this natural and prescribed order in relation to faith and baptism. Consequently, whether a *strict adherence*, as Christian churches, to the order of the Christian commission, or a *two-fold inversion* of that order be schism, *you* are unquestionably involved ; and how you are to extricate yourself from this dilemma, except by adhering to the order of the commission *throughout*, I am at a loss to conceive. But to return to ourselves, (for I had almost forgotten that *we* were on trial !) —you misrepresent us, my friend. We *wish* to receive our Christian brethren to church fellowship ; we should rejoice to receive them *all* ; we never reject *any* who are willing to enter by that porch in the front of the church which Christ erected for that purpose : we set this divinely-

appointed door *wide open*—(thus showing our attachment to *open*, though not to *mixed* communion!)—and we proclaim, audibly and distinctly, ‘Ho! ye believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring a participation in the provisions of his table, *Come and welcome!* This is the way of his appointing—the gate of the Lord—at which *all* the righteous may enter. Who can forbid water, that *you* should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? Come in, ye blessed of the Lord; wherefore do ye stand without? Now, my friend, if, after such a full and free and scriptural invitation as this, they turn away, intimating that they do not think it essential they should enter in that way, *they* are the separatists, not we. What can we do? *We* did not erect the porch. *Christ* erected it; and we have not received any orders, either to pull it down, or to block it up; nor have we been furnished with instructions to leave this scriptural, Grecian porch open, for the use of *one* class of Christians only, and to make a breach, a *schism* in the building, to accommodate *other* Christians with a side entrance of Roman architecture. The question is, Shall we venture on such a schism *without* instructions? *You* may. **WE NEVER WILL.** If a separation on these grounds *be* schism, still the odium and criminality of heinous sin cannot attach to *us*, since we are *desirous* of a *scriptural* union with “*all* who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” But such a union as you propose, would be a combination of the members against the Head!—a *schism* of the most appalling



description. Nor would such a combination be likely to promote harmony among the members. As we have already observed, such a union, unless, indeed, both parties agree to treat a positive command of Jesus Christ as a matter of *indifference*, must, of rigid necessity, *promote* the identical schisms against which the Apostle directs his censure—*internal* schisms, contentions, jealousies, and mutual recriminations. A formal separation, if it *be* schism, is not *such* a schism : it is perfectly compatible with Christian love, and Christian union in those Christian pursuits which are not peculiar to church fellowship ; and for which, therefore, baptism is not a prerequisite. But to decline to form a church union on principles not authorized by the New Testament is *not* schism ; and a Baptist is the last person in the world, who should criminate his brother for such a separation.

*M.* But “it deserves your serious consideration, that you are *contending* for that schism in the body of Christ, against which he so fervently prayed, so anxiously guarded, and which his apostles represent as its greatest calamity and reproach. ‘The glory,’ said our Lord, ‘which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one ; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.’ Here it cannot be doubted that our Pedobaptist brethren are comprehended in this prayer, because our Lord declares it was preferred, not merely for the disciples then existing, but for those also who

should hereafter believe through their word, adding, 'that they *all* may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' In these words, we find him praying for a visible union among his disciples; such a union as the world might easily perceive:—and this he entreats in behalf of them all, that they *all* may be one. The advocates of strict communion plead for a visible *disunion*."—[*Reasons*, 18. H. 295.]

S. And perhaps it will appear that they plead for a visible *union* too: not, however, *such* a visible union as our Lord did *not* pray for; but *such* a visible union as he evidently *did* pray might subsist among all his disciples—a visible union in *observing* his will, and extending the boundaries of his kingdom. That our Lord's intercession included all true Christians, in every age of the church, is freely admitted; and that he prayed that they might *all be one*, is equally certain. But allow me to ask, my friend, In what was this oneness to consist? Evidently, judging from the context, one bond of this union was to be the *truth*. "Sanctify them through thy *truth*; thy word is *truth*. For their sakes also I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the *truth*." A union, therefore, which *systematically* compromises *any* part of the *truth*, cannot be included in our Lord's intercession. It is a manifest absurdity to suppose that our Lord should appoint baptism in his name as the very first personal duty of *all* his disciples, and yet pray that they should form a church-union, in which it should be *stipulated*,

that of some disciples obedience to this command should not be required! Of whatever kind was the union for which Christ prayed, it could not possibly be such a union as that for which *you* contend; since baptism is demonstrably the first personal obligation of *all* who are included in the prayer. The command is as extensive as the intercession. Did the prayer include *all* believers, in *every* age of the church? So does the command. And every attempt to promote the object of the former at the expense of the latter, is, at the best, equivocal obedience, and systematic dereliction from one part of Christian duty. Again, if we take into consideration the *model* of this union, it will be evident that a mixed communion church, as such, cannot possibly be an exemplification. Our Lord prayed that all believers might be one, *as he and the Father were one*. Now, in what particulars, applicable to believers, were Christ and the Father one? If we examine only the context, taking the prayer as a whole, we shall find that, whatever unity besides was intended, the Father and the Son were of one mind in a certain particular, concerning which the members of a mixed communion church systematically agree that such unity is unnecessary—they were of one mind respecting the *commands* which Christ delivered to his disciples. “Now,” said our Lord, addressing his Father, in allusion to his disciples, “they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest unto me*; and they have received them. *I have given them thy word.*” Here, it is evident, Christ

and the Father were of one mind respecting the Christian *commands*; and this is one part of the model of that union which our Lord prayed might subsist among *all* his disciples. On the contrary, mixed communion churches, as such, are theoretically, practically, and by special agreement, of *two* minds, respecting the very first command which Christ requires his disciples to obey. Christ also assures his disciples, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up." Now, on your own confession, Pedobaptism is a plant which our heavenly Father has not planted. But, instead of adopting all scriptural expedients for rooting it up, Mixed Baptists nurse it, and cherish its growth, transplanting it into their own soil; and, by displacing the plant which our heavenly Father *has* planted, perpetuate the unscriptural exotic. Christ, in praying that his disciples might be one as he and his Father were one, prayed for a union in *honoring* his commands; you plead for a union, the distinguishing feature of which is a *covenant*, that obedience to the first command enjoined on a believer shall not be required! It is true, you profess to be of opinion that Pedobaptism *ought* to be rooted up; but, with strange inconsistency, you introduce into your churches, persons who, however estimable their characters, *feel a deep interest in its growth!* And, as members of the same church, possessed of the same rights and privileges, it is absurd to plead that, because you do not individually practise Pedobaptism, therefore you are not actively concerned in its promotion; while it is evident to every one but

yourselves, that *as a church* you do practise it: and for the practice of the church, every member is accountable. You may say you only tolerate it; but nothing can be more futile. While you are the majority, you directly sanction it by your votes in its favor: when you become the minority, in addition to this sanction, you will form a constituent portion of a community, the major part of which pleads for it, and promotes it by individual practice. And, having once admitted your Pedobaptist friends, you have empowered them to demand, *as a right*, that the church of which they and you are equally members, shall practise, and formally agree to continue in practice, *two baptisms*—an innovation, inferior in importance only to the introduction of two Lords and two gospels. “ONE LORD—ONE FAITH—ONE BAPTISM,”—ought to be inscribed, in legible characters, in the most conspicuous place in every Christian church. Christ prayed that all his disciples might be one as he and the Father were one. But CHRIST commanded all believers to be baptized, appointing this ordinance as the mode in which they should profess their faith in him, and enjoining on Christian ministers to require, 1. Faith. 2. Baptism. 3. Church fellowship. This command, in common with all others, he received of the FATHER. And further, the HOLY SPIRIT so enlightened the minds of the apostles, that they could not misunderstand it; and inspired the sacred penmen to record it, in connexion with its practical exemplification, for the guidance of *all* believers, in every succeeding age. Here, then, is a command, concerning which the Father, the

Son, and the Holy Spirit, are of *one* mind; but respecting which your mixed churches deliberately agree to be of *two minds*, and to adopt *two practices*! In whatever, therefore, consists the union for which Christ prayed on behalf of his disciples, he could not, by any possibility, have intended *a union of Baptists and Pedobaptists in mixed church fellowship*. But we should hail with sincere delight, such a union as that for which Christ evidently *did* pray—a union, the bond of which should be love to God, and love to him who “loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water, through the word; that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.” But such a union, while it undoubtedly includes Christian affection towards “all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,” must, of necessity, be a union in *keeping* the commands of Christ—a union in promoting the interests of the Redeemer’s kingdom, by personal obedience to his laws, and by a systematic inculcation of them on all who would unite with us in church-fellowship. The first relative duty of every Christian, whether he be a member of a church or not, is undoubtedly, (as he possesses ability and opportunity,) to tell the glad tidings of salvation to his fellow men. In this Christian duty, which is not peculiar to a church relation, Baptists and Pedobaptists can consistently unite. Here, we are of one mind, one heart, and one soul; our principles are one, our directory is one, our practice is one, our aim is one. The love of Christ constrains us both; both are borne away by its impelling influence. Here,

then, we occupy common ground : there is a oneness of feeling, of interest, and of object. Here we are emphatically ONE. But there is another duty, which, if not equally important, is equally *imperative* with that of publishing the gospel, and which, in the New Testament, immediately follows, and never precedes, the belief of the gospel—*Christian Baptism*—a duty which all believers should not only personally obey, but inculcate on those believers who have not obeyed it. But Baptists and Pedobaptists are of two minds respecting this ordinance ; the latter, indeed, (with few modern exceptions, ) agreeing with *us*, that baptism is the appointed, and only appointed mode of entrance into visible church fellowship, but opposed to us both respecting its subjects and mode of administration. In church fellowship, then, Baptists and Pedobaptists cannot consistently unite. Here, they cannot be one ; for, whichever is right, one party *obeys* the command, and the other does *not* obey it ; and, by consequence, one party inculcates *Christian obedience*, and the other inculcates a *deviation* from the Christian law. Here, then, we divide, and here we *must* divide, each acting agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience. While Pedobaptists persist, for whatever reason, in declining a compliance with what *we* believe to be Christian baptism, *our union* with them in church fellowship would be an anomaly equally opposed to reason, to their own sentiments, and to Christian principle—a union, which cannot plead the least shadow of scriptural authority. What is Christian church fellowship, but a union of Christians in *keeping*

the Christian ordinances as they were delivered? But a mixed church, so far from exemplifying *such* a union, is a fellowship established on a solemn compact, the leading article of which is, that a compliance with the very first personal obligation of every believer shall *not* be enforced—a special agreement that its members shall *not* be required to comply with their Lord's commission, either in the matter or the order of it; but that some members shall be at liberty to deviate from either or both! *Christian* union commends itself to the heart of every Christian: but let us be disunited to the end of time, rather than form an *unscriptural* alliance. If our Pedobaptist brethren cannot see it their duty to be baptized—rather than compromise the principle, which they, for the most part, equally with the Strict Baptists, profess to derive from the New Testament—that baptism is essential to church fellowship,—let us form our churches, *each* on the plan which he believes to be the mind of Christ; and unite with each other in every Christian feeling, and in every Christian pursuit, to which baptism has not a special relation. In my humble opinion, this will be a much happier exemplification of “Christian communion,” and of the union which our Lord prayed might subsist among all his disciples, than a connexion which, on the part of the *Baptists* at least, involves the occasional sacrifice of a Christian ordinance.

*M.* Still you plead for “a visible *disunion*; nor will it avail you to reply, that you cultivate a fraternal affection towards Christians of other denominations, while you insist on such a visible



separation, as must make it apparent to the world that they are *not* one. Internal sentiments of esteem are cognizable only by the Searcher of hearts ; external indications are all that the world has to judge by ; and so far are you from exhibiting these, that you value yourselves in maintaining such a position towards your fellow Christians, as confounds them, in a very important point, with infidels and heathens. What degree of criminality may attach to such a procedure it is not for me to determine ; but I have no hesitation in affirming, that it is most abhorrent from the intention of the Head of the church, and miserably compensated by that more correct view of the ordinance of baptism which is alleged in its support. ‘Charity is the end of the commandment,’ ‘the fulfilling of the law ;’ and since the religion of Christ is not ceremonial, but vital, and consists less in correct opinions, and ritual observances, than in those graces of the Spirit, which are the ‘hidden man of the heart,’ it deserves serious consideration, whether so palpable a violation of the unity of the church, is not more offensive in the eyes of Him who ‘tries the hearts and the reins,’ than an involuntary mistake of a ceremonial precept.”—[*Reasons*, 29, 30. *H.* 225.]

S. My dear friend, this is a serious charge. That we plead for a separation, is true ; but *why* ? If you imagine that we do not sincerely deplore this separation, you do us an injustice. It is not a schism, for which *we* are accountable ; nor can we *prevent* it, except by a deliberate abandonment of the principles of church fellowship confessedly prescribed by Christ and his apostles. A neces-

sity is laid upon us, by the sentiments of our brethren; and, being driven to a choice of one of two evils, we conscientiously choose that which appears to us to be the least. We love our brethren; but we do not, and we hope we never shall, so love even the best of Christians, as to deviate from our own views of the Christian commission in deference to theirs. Assuredly, this is not *that* "charity, which is the fulfilling of the law," but a charity *in deviation* from the law. "By *this* we know that we love the children of God, (said the most affectionate of all the apostles,) when we love God, and *keep* his commandments." This is a principle, my friend, which you would not for a moment hesitate to apply to *individual* obedience. We, in addition, extend it to the obedience of our *churches*, as such. We are no advocates for a succedaneous love—a species of charity nowhere delineated or commended in the New Testament. Nor will the most attentive perusal of that inspired volume present us with a solitary instance of that *undervaluation* of Christian baptism which forms so prominent a feature in the argument for mixed communion. Assuredly, "the graces of the Spirit" were never intended to be placed in opposition to the ritual institutions of Jesus Christ. But, if Christian baptism is to be depreciated and lightly esteemed, on what principle are we to account for the profound reverence which is manifested by all our brethren for the Lord's supper? How is it that *that* "ceremonial precept" is never despised and undervalued? and, instead of being celebrated, as it deserves, with the most affectionate veneration, virtually

stigmatized as a "petty speculation, and minute opinion?" Does universal suffrage confer a dignity on *one* "ritual observance;" and is *another* "ceremonial precept" rendered unimportant, simply because it is unpopular? On this principle, the Christian religion, as a whole, being decidedly the most unpopular of any, must be the least dignified. Who authorized you, my friend, to observe such a *marked difference* in your treatment of two "ceremonial precepts," enjoined by the same Lord, in a certain order, on precisely the same persons? What is there, we should be glad to know, in the whole of the New Testament, to justify such an invidious distinction? The Christian rituals are not rivals: both emanate from the same glorious Lord, are invested with the same Divine authority, and equally demand the devout homage of every Christian, and of every Christian church. But even if a strict adherence to the order of our Lord's commission *were* as the tithing of "anise and mint and cummin," (which it were impiety to suppose;)—if a cordial submission to Christian baptism *were* but as a single grain in the scale of Christian obedience, (as has been gravely asserted!) still the observance of the moral precepts can never sanction the neglect of those which are ritual, and which, whatever may be their relative importance, are equally imperative—both having emanated from the same Supreme Legislator. "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone." The Jews were not reprov'd for a strict adherence to ceremonial precepts, but for neglecting the weightier matters of the law; and if our attention to the

Christian rites, or to either of them, were a succedaneum for Christian love, there would be some pertinence in your rebuke: at present, there is none. What right, we should be glad to know, have Mixed Baptists to assume that *they* are the only Baptists who "cultivate a fraternal affection towards Christians of other denominations?" Is a union with Pedobaptists in *one* Christian ordinance a more certain indication of love than an equally cordial union with them in *every* Christian exercise not peculiar to external church fellowship? Or is that *one* association so superlatively and exclusively lovely and splendid, as to obscure and extinguish the character of *every other* Christian association? So then, a union in prayer, and praise, and preaching the gospel, and the various exercises of Christian benevolence in which we *do* coalesce with our Pedobaptist brethren, is *nothing*: and a joint-participation of *one* Christian ordinance, in which, for certain conscientious reasons, we are *not* a party, is *every thing*—the *all in all*—the *one omnivorous, all-absorbing* indication of Christian love! We do not need to be told, that every thing, unaccompanied with love, is nothing. We are fully convinced that love is the cardinal grace: but then who authorized the assumption that *mixed communion is love*, and that, in the New Testament, LOVE means MIXED COMMUNION? Or where is it asserted, that the joint-participation of the Lord's supper is to constitute *the test* of Christian charity? especially, *such* a union at the Lord's table as is confessedly, (though, in your opinion, justifiable!) an infringement on the regulations *prescribed* by

“the Governor of the feast,” in his last commission? Surely, my dear friend, this is A NEW TEST ACT; and, strange to tell, ENACTED BY A PROTESTANT DISSENTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY! Now, just consider, for a moment, *the consequence* of making our union with Pedobaptists at the Lord’s table *the test* of our Christian regard towards them; and I am persuaded your benevolent mind will abandon the position for ever. On this principle, it follows, of necessity, that the Strict Baptists (let the *fact* be as it may,) are to be *considered* as destitute of Christian love!—Therefore they are to be *considered* as having no title to the comfortable persuasion that they have “passed from death unto life:” for *hereby* “we know that we have passed from death unto life—because we love the brethren.” Nay, it becomes a matter for grave consideration with the church, whether these *strict* adherents to the order of their Lord’s commission *have* “received the grace of life:” for “he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.”—And is it not very presumptuous in Pedobaptists to repose in unsuspecting security while their persons are accessible to these enemies of mixed communion? for “whoso hateth his brother is *a murderer!* and,”—Nay, in pity stop—peradventure they may have repentance; and, by yielding to a *lovely* deviation from their Lord’s commission, be acknowledged as exhibiting “the movements and expressions of charity,” and be released from the painful suspicion, for want of evidence to the contrary, of being murderers, destitute of spiritual life, and exposed to eternal

death !\* Now, my friend, I cannot for a moment suppose that you *believe* we are destitute of Christian love to our Pedobaptist brethren, and there-

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\* If the practice of our opponents *were*, as is represented, the essence of Christian charity, what an important service might be rendered, in the event of a new translation, by the substitution of the term *mixed communion*, for the words *love* and *charity*, in all those texts in which the expressions relate to the exhibition of this grace towards our fellow Christians. Not that these terms are considered *precisely synonymous* ; for though the Strict Baptist cannot obtain credit for “ exhibiting *external* indications of esteem towards Pedobaptists,” the existence of a sort of *latent* love in their breasts, is not, we believe, in every case, absolutely denied. As a *synecdoche*, the alteration must be very imposing, and “ in perfect accordance with the genius of Oriental speech, which, in the exhibition of a complex object, is wont to represent it only by its boldest and most impressive feature.” The following may serve as a specimen:—

Now abideth faith, hope, *mixed communion*, these three: but the greatest of these is *mixed communion*.

Put on—bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering ; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. And above all these things, put on *mixed communion*, which is the bond of perfectness.

Neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith, which worketh by *mixed communion*.

It might be still more desirable, with respect to the last of those passages, to convince the new translators of the propriety of deviating from the *letter* of the original, in favor of its supposed *spirit*, by the substitution of *baptism* for *circumcision* ; and of *no baptism* for *uncircumcision*. With these trifling corrections, the argument would be complete, and this unhappy controversy would be laid to rest for ever. No Strict Baptist, however bigotted, could withstand such irrefragable evidence ; and all Christians might form one glorious communion, having *one Lord, many faiths, and no baptism*.

fore obnoxious to these tremendous consequences. Then why, by perpetually exhibiting strict communion as indicating the absence of that grace, convey such a hateful insinuation? How studiously, and industriously, and successfully, this false imputation must have been circulated by some of our "public teachers," (from whom, Mr. Hall assures us, almost every error is derived!) is evident, from the circumstance, that among our liberal opponents, a Strict Baptist, and a strait-laced bigot, are, very generally, convertible terms! My dear friend, however charitable you may feel, and justly feel, towards Christians of other denominations, you have no right to misrepresent the Strict Baptists. If you have expended all your candor, pray bestow upon us a scantling of justice. To bring us into disrepute, you tell the world that Strict Baptists exhibit "no internal indications of esteem towards Christians of other denominations." But this is not true. And for proof of my assertion, I appeal to our mutual friend, Mr. Hall. It is not long since, adopting his language, you charged us with inconsistency for *doing* that, which you now accuse us of *not* doing!—for acting towards other Christians, in *every* particular except church fellowship, precisely as *you* do. But that acknowledgment, or, rather, that *accusation*—(for our very virtues are represented as a stigma and a reproach!)—that we *do* act in every other particular just as *you* act, and *do not* withhold from them other tokens of fraternal regard,—is utterly irreconcilable with the charge you *now* prefer; viz. that, "so far from exhibiting external indications of esteem, we value ourselves in main-

taining such a position towards our fellow christians as confounds them, in a very important point, with infidels and heathens." It will not avail to reply, in mitigation of the severity of this charge, that you alluded merely to communion at the Lord's table ; because you have alleged this single restriction as the very proof that we do not exhibit towards Pedobaptists *any* external indications of esteem. But, one of these accusations must be withdrawn : it is impossible, in the nature of things, that *both* should be true ; one of them *must* be a fiction, not to say a calumny. You tell us, in the first place, in agreement with Mr. Hall, how inconsistent we are, in *not* withholding from Pedobaptists every token of fraternal regard. Well, we admit the fact, and have endeavored to repel the alleged inconsistency. But it is too much, after this, to turn round, and tell us, in the next place, that we *do* withhold these tokens of fraternal regard ; or, in other words, that we do *not* exhibit external indications of esteem towards Christians of other denominations ! My friend we admit the first accusation, and repel the supposed inconsistency. But we deny the last, and challenge you to the proof. What ! is there no external "Christian communion," but at the Lord's table ? Undoubtedly there is. But as you may hesitate to receive *my* opinion, just be so kind as once more to consult our good friend Mr. Hall ; and you will instantly discover, that in this particular we are precisely of one opinion. "Nothing is more certain," says that great writer, [*Reasons*, 35, 36. *H.* 298.] "than that the communion of saints is by no means confined to one particular



occasion, or limited to one transaction, such as that of assembling around the Lord's table: it extends to *all* the modes by which believers recognize each other, as the members of a common head. *Every* expression of fraternal regard, *every* participation in the enjoyments of social worship, *every* instance of the unity of the Spirit exerted in prayer and supplication, or in acts of Christian sympathy and friendship, as truly belongs to the communion of saints, as the celebration of the Eucharist." And, however *you* may be disposed, *he* avows his conviction, that in all these particulars but one, we act *just as you do*. I hope, therefore, in future, you will study your author to better purpose, than again to accuse us of *not* doing that, for *doing* which, while we decline to ascend the last step of his ladder of perfect love, Mr. Hall reproaches us with inconsistency. I do not expect you to agree with me; but do, for your own credit, agree with your friend.

*M.* Well, well—I did not mean to disagree with Mr. Hall, I assure you! I suppose I must have forgotten what he said. But, as I perceive now, that *he* has given you credit for acting towards Christians of other denominations just as we do, except in one particular, I will not again accuse you of not exhibiting towards them external indications of esteem. But, allow me once more to recur to the vain boast of the Strict Baptists, of a scrupulous adherence to the example of the apostles.

"Say, did the apostles refuse the communion of good men? Did they set the example of dividing them into two classes, a qualified and a disquali-

fied class; and while they acknowledge the latter were objects of the divine favor equally with themselves, enjoin on their converts the duty of disowning them at the Lord's table? Are any traces to be discovered in the New Testament, of a society of *Purists*, who, under the pretence of superior illumination on one subject, kept themselves aloof from the Christian world, excluding from their communion myriads of those whom they believed to be heirs of salvation? Did they narrow their views of church fellowship—for the purpose of holding up to view one neglected truth?—The direct tendency of such a principle is not merely to annihilate the unity of the church, but to contract the heart, to narrow the understanding, and in the room of 'holding forth the word of life', to invest every petty speculation, and minute opinion, with the dignity of a fundamental truth." —[*Reasons*, 30, 31. *H.* 296.]

S. Gently, my friend, gently. You have no right, even by implication, to class a Christian precept with "petty speculations, and minute opinions. Does the Lord's supper also, as *you* celebrate it, occupy the same degraded position? I humbly conceive, that the least of the Christian commands is as imperative as the greatest. But who will have the hardihood to affirm that baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is a *little command*? That a Christian community cannot be expected to maintain a uniformity of sentiment in "every petty speculation, and minute opinion," is freely admitted: but nothing is more clear, than that they *can* and ought to maintain a uniformity of both sen-

timent and practice, in relation to *all the commands of Jesus Christ*, of perpetual obligation. There may be speculations, respecting which, uniformity may be unimportant; but to place a single command of Jesus Christ, or perpetual obligation on a level with these, indicates no high degree of reverence for his supreme authority. In reply to your string of questions relative to the apostolic church, you must allow me to ask a few previous questions. Did any good man ever *apply* to the apostles, to be received without Christian baptism? *Would he have been so received, if he had made the application?* Did two such classes of Christians as we are acquainted with, *exist* in the apostolic age? *If they had existed, would the apostles have deviated from their instructions?* Are there any traces in the New Testament of such *Mixed* communities as yours, having one Lord, one faith, and *two baptisms?* some of the members being allowed to substitute a human invention for a Christian command, (*that* Christian command too, which was enjoined as “the *prior* obligation!”) thus making void the law of Christ by their traditions? The direct tendency of such a system is, as we have already seen, to undermine the authority of Christ, to destroy the *unity* which he prayed might subsist among his disciples, and, under the specious pretence of charity, to promote the most baneful and incurable *schisms*.

*M.* It is not pretended, certainly, that there were any churches, in the apostolic age, composed of Baptists and Pedobaptists, for a very obvious reason. But the principle on which we proceed, in the admission of our erroneous fellow Chris-

tians, is distinctly recognized by St. Paul. He did not require uniformity of sentiment and practice ; but inculcated on the church at Rome, in a spirit of the most enlarged catholicism, the toleration of their erroneous brethren : “ Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye. For *God hath received him.*” From hence we conclude, that we ought to receive all whom God has received : and as our Pedobaptist brethren are unquestionably of that number, their reception is as imperative as if they had been mentioned by name.

S. I am quite aware, my friend, that this is your strong position. And I can assure you I have not the slightest desire to evade any argument which you may please to advance. We will, therefore, if you please, make this the subject of our next Conversation.

M. We will : and if you are not then convinced of your error in rejecting pious Pedobaptists, I shall begin to think you are incorrigible.

S. Perhaps, my friend, we should not reject such as the apostles would have received. But we must not anticipate. When shall we meet again ?

M. To-morrow evening, if you please : and recollect, I am quite prepared to receive *you*, my friend, weak in the faith as I think you are !

S. *Receive* me, indeed ! And IS THAT ALL ? You must surely have forgotten your precedent. The Apostle enjoins not only that the strong should *receive* their weak brethren ; but also, that, rather than throw a stumbling block in their way, they should even *abandon their own practice* ! Now it is notorious, that this practice of yours—this mixed communion—has proved a great stumbling block

to some of your Baptist brethren. Under a momentary impulse of *feeling*, after many hesitations and doubts, they have at length been induced to yield to the fascinations and allurements of your mixed assemblies, contrary to the dictates of a cool and deliberate judgment, whereby their "weak" consciences have been wounded. You must, therefore, if you would make any pretensions to "*walking charitably*," extend your courtesy; STRETCH IT OUT TO THE FULL LENGTH OF YOUR PRECEDENT; and not only *receive* us, but, in deference to our "weakness," *abandon your favorite practice*! Just be so kind as to think this over, my friend, before our next interview.

## CONVERSATION VI.

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A RECEPTION TO CHURCH FELLOWSHIP, OF ALL WHOM GOD HAS RECEIVED, IN OBEDIENCE TO THE CHRISTIAN COMMISSION, BUT NOT IN DEVIATION FROM IT, THE IMPERATIVE DUTY OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, NOTWITHSTANDING A DIVERSITY OF OPINION AND PRACTICE IN RELATION TO MATTERS OF INDIFFERENCE.

## ANALYSIS.

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The 14th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans inapplicable to the present controversy. The situation of the parties reversed. The ancient peculiarities discretionary; both being allowable, but neither imperative. What Baptist will venture to affirm this of the modern peculiarities? The *principle* on which toleration was enjoined. The ancient diversities not subversive of any existing Divine law. In the opinion of the Baptists, their Pedobaptist brethren make void a law of Christ by their tradition. The application of the injunction to our diversities equally illogical and unscriptural. The Apostle himself expressly distinguishes between the diversities then tolerated, and existing Divine commands. The difference between innocent will-worship, and the neglect of a Christian injunction. The early churches were neither required nor allowed to tolerate any practical deviation from the standing law of Christ. The apostles accused of neglecting an express command of Christ, of the highest moment. But not convicted. Consequently they were *not* tolerated as good men, "weak in the faith," with liberty to persist in the alleged neglect of a Christian command! The kind of diversities to which the injunction is applicable. Example. The Christian Fasts and Festivals, so called. Strict Baptists not guilty of departing from the precedent. The general rules of the Bible not subversive of the particular laws of Christ. Cornelius and his household. We imitate Peter's reception of diversified Christians, lest we should withstand God. The members of the *true* church to be received to external church fellowship in obedience to the Christian commission, not in deviation from it. The baptism of the Spirit not intended to supersede water baptism. Peter assigned the evidence of the former as the very reason for submission to the latter. The precedent in the 14th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is applicable to such diversities as ours, or it is *not*. If it is applicable, it enjoins a personal abandonment of a Christian command, whenever obedience would in any way occasion an erroneous brother to commit sin. If it is *not* applicable to such diversities, then it does not sustain the argument for mixed communion. We should adopt the precedent *as a whole* in relation to similar diversities. The tendency of the respective systems.

## CONVERSATION VI.

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M. Welcome, my friend ! I have always been glad to see you ; but I am particularly pleased this evening. Our Conversations hitherto have not been very congenial with my feelings ; and it is to me, I assure you, quite “refreshing,” to turn from “the rigid and repulsive principles,” which have at present engaged our attention, to the contemplation of “the generous maxims of the New Testament.”

S. Then perhaps we may agree to-night ; for I assure you, my friend, I am quite as disposed to adhere to the “generous maxims” of the New Testament, as to what you designate our “rigid and repulsive principles.” I am no advocate for dividing the scriptures between us, appropriating one set of texts to my own party, and the others to our opponents. I would not only say, with Chillingworth, “The Bible *alone* is the religion of Protestants ;” but, The scriptures, even *all* the scriptures which are applicable, shall be the foundation of every part of my religious system. That creed or that practice which requires the rejection of *any* relevant part of the word of God, in its *intended* application, must, I conceive, be indefensible. Now then, my friend, be so kind as



to state these "generous" maxims of the New Testament, that we may ascertain whether, or not, they are opposed to what you are pleased to denominate our "rigid and repulsive" principles.

*M.* Besides innumerable inculcations of kindness and brotherly love, in their most amiable forms, there is one exhortation to which I would invite your particular attention. "We are expressly commanded in the scriptures, to tolerate in the church those diversities of opinion which are not inconsistent with salvation. We learn from the New Testament, that a diversity of views subsisted in the times of the apostles, betwixt the Jewish and Gentile converts especially, the former retaining an attachment to the ancient law, and conceiving the most essential parts of it to be still in force; the latter, from correcter views, rejecting it altogether. Some declined the use of certain kinds of meat forbidden by Moses, which others partook of without scruple: 'one man esteemed one day above another,' conscientiously observing the principal Jewish solemnities; 'another esteemed every day alike.' Instead of attempting to silence these differences, by interposing his authority, St. Paul enjoins mutual toleration. 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? unto his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; for God is able to make

him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' (Rom. xiv. 1—5.) To the same purpose are the following injunctions in the next chapter:—'We then that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Now the God of peace and consolation grant you to be like-minded one towards another, according to Jesus Christ, that ye may with one mind and with one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.' (Rom. xv. 1, 5—7.) It cannot be denied, that these passages contain an apostolic canon for the regulation of the conduct of such Christians as agree in fundamentals, while they differ on points of subordinate importance: and by this canon they are commanded to exercise a reciprocal toleration and indulgence, and on no account to proceed to an open rupture. In order to determine how far these apostolic injunctions oblige us to tolerate the supposed error of our Pedobaptist brethren, we have merely to consider whether it necessarily excludes them from being of the number of those whom Christ has received to the glory of the Father, whether it be possible to hold it with Christian sincerity, and finally, whether its abettors will stand or fall in the eternal judgment. If these questions are answered in the way which Christian candor irresistibly suggests, and which your own judgment approves, they conclude in favor of the admission of Pedobaptists to communion, not less forcibly than if they had

been mentioned by name; and all attempts to evade them, must prove futile and abortive. If it be asserted, on the contrary, that a mistake on the subject of baptism is not comprehended in the above description, the passages adduced must be acknowledged irrelevant, and the whole controversy assumes a new aspect.”—[*Terms*, 96, 98, 99, 101, 102. *H.* 65—68.]

S. My dear friend, I have been listening to your observations with profound attention, and cordially approve of the toleration and forbearance enjoined by the Apostle. And though the *reception* here recommended could not be a reception to external church fellowship, since both parties were already members; still, as they *were* members, and continued to sustain that relation, it appears to me, a fair inference, that, had they now, for the first time, applied for admission into the church at Rome, their points of difference would not have prevented their reception. But what then? Why, simply this: That *similar* diversities are to be tolerated in our churches. This is all; and, consequently, the precedent is TOTALLY INAPPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY. Do you seriously believe that the circumstances of the respective parties are *similar*?

M. I do. “The forbearance which the Apostle enjoins, was exercised towards a class of persons exactly in the same situation, as far as its principle is concerned, with the modern Pedobaptists; that is, towards persons who violated a precept which was still supposed to be in force.—[*Reply*, 168. *H.* 229.]

S. True—"supposed" to be in force! But, allow me to ask, my friend, Is the violation of a precept which, (allowing the utmost for which you plead,) was only supposed to be in force, but which, on your own confession, was not, at the time, *actually* in force, and which, if it *ever were* in force, was *never binding on the party accused of violating it*,—to be placed on a level with the neglect of a Christian precept, which, on your own confession, *is* in force, which *is* binding, and binding on *every* believer? The practice of the Gentile was, on your own showing, *correct*. It was perfectly *unexceptionable*: while the utmost that can be pretended of the scrupulosities of the Jew is, that they were *allowable*. Are you, then, prepared to affirm the former of *pedobaptism*, and the latter of the sacred rite to which *you* have attended? The Jew was the weak brother: The Gentile was strong. Are *you* weak? And are the *Pedobaptists* strong? If so, the controversy assumes a new aspect! If not, the situation of the parties, (as far as this view is concerned,) so far from being "*exactly similar*" is, in the very last degree, *dis-similar*.

M. But "it is not, be it remembered, by a peremptory decision of the controversy, or by assigning the victory to one in preference to the other, that the Apostle attempts to effect a reconciliation. He endeavors to bring it about while each retains his peculiar sentiments; from which it is manifest, that there was nothing in the views of either party, which in his judgment formed a legitimate barrier to union. The attachment of the Jew to the observation of the legal ceremonies, was

not, in his opinion, a sufficient reason for refusing to unite with him, by whom they were disregarded."—[*Reply*, 168. *H.* 229.]

S. Nor *was* it a sufficient reason. That the Apostle endeavored to reconcile *those* parties, while each retained his peculiarities, is undeniable; from which, as you justly observe, it is evident there was nothing in their views which formed a legitimate barrier to their union. But whether, from a similar conviction, he would, if presented with the opportunity, adopt a similar conduct, in relation to *our* peculiarities, is quite another question. Be that as it may, you must allow me to dissent, *entirely*, from your preliminary observation. My friend, the Apostle *did* decide the controversy. He *did* say which was the weak brother; "Another, *who is weak*, eateth herbs." He clearly *justified* the Gentile converts, while he respected the conscientious scruples of his brethren in the flesh: "I KNOW, AND AM PERSUADED, (says he,) THAT THERE IS NOTHING UNCLEAN IN ITSELF: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean." A more "peremptory decision of the controversy," than this, is scarcely conceivable. And even in exhorting the Gentiles not to throw a stumbling-block in the way of their weak brethren, he affirms that their practice is, in itself, *good*. "Let not your *good* be evil spoken of." Unquestionably, the Apostle recommended mutual toleration, while each party retained his peculiarity: but *why*? Plainly, because the practice for which each party contended, was *discretionary*. Each party *might* retain his peculiarity; but the peculiarity which each party might retain, was *not binding*, either on himself, or on

his brother. The indiscriminate participation of meat was not obligatory, either on the Gentile, or on the Jew; for it was not commanded: nor was a scrupulous abstinence imperative, either on the Jew, or on the Gentile; for it was not commanded. Both practices, if attended to conscientiously, and without a violation of the law of love, were clearly *allowable*, but as clearly *unimperative*. Show that this is true of baptism and pedobaptism, and the controversy will be decided. But who will venture to maintain, that the substitution of a worldly ceremony for a Christian ordinance is allowable in *any* Christian? or that Christian baptism is not enjoined on *all* believers? The other peculiarity to which you refer us, is subject to the same decision. One man esteemed "one day above another:" another esteemed "every day alike." Here also they are exhorted to mutual toleration. But *why*? Plainly, because, as in the former case, the peculiarity of each party, though *allowable*, was *unimperative*. But who will presume to affirm this of *our* peculiarities? If the scriptures may be permitted to decide, pedobaptism is *neither imperative nor allowable*. They who "teach for doctrines the commandments of men," are expressly said to "make void the law of God" by their traditions. On the contrary, if we may form a judgment from the same infallible testimony, Christian baptism is *not only justifiable, but imperative*; and imperative, not on *one* class of Christians only, but on *all* penitent believers. The observance of days, and abstinence from meat, though confessedly weaknesses, were clearly *allowable*. Will you affirm this of pedobaptism, and of the neglect of the Christian ordinance?

The non-observance of days, and the participation of meat, though 'good,' were *unimperative*: and the latter was not only not to be required of the "*weak* in the faith," but was actually to be waived on the part of the *strong*, in deference to their weak brethren! But what Baptist would be so accommodating? And yet pedobaptism *must* be allowable, and Christian baptism *must* be unimperative, or the ancient and the modern controversies are, in their principle, totally dissimilar.

*M.* But "neither of the ancient, nor of the modern error, is it pretended that they are fundamental, or that they endanger the salvation of those who hold them. Thus far they stand on the same footing, and the presumption is, that they ought to be treated in the same manner. Before we come to this conclusion, however, it behooves us to examine the *principle* on which the Apostle enjoins toleration, and if this is applicable in its full extent to the case of our Pedobaptist brethren, no room is left for doubt. The *principle* plainly is, that the error in question was not of such magnitude as to preclude him who maintained it from the favor of God. 'Let not him who eateth, despise him who eateth not; and let not him who eateth not, judge him who eateth; *for God hath received him.* Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up; *for God is able to make him stand.*' In the same manner, in the next chapter of the same Epistle, after reminding the strong that it is their duty to bear the infirmities of the weak, he adds,

‘Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also hath received us to the glory of the Father.’ If such is the reason assigned for mutual toleration, and it is acknowledged to be a sufficient one, which none can deny without impeaching the inspiration of the writer, it is as conclusive respecting the obligation of tolerating every error which is consistent with a state of salvation, as if that error had been mentioned by name; and as few, if any, are to be met with, who doubt the piety of many Pedobaptists, it not only justifies their reception, but renders it an indispensable duty.”—*[Reasons, 33, 34. H. 297.]*

S. It is freely admitted, my friend, that your statement of the *principle* on which toleration was enjoined in the church at Rome, is, as far as it extends correct; and if what you have advanced were *the whole* of the principle on which the Apostle proceeded, I do not see how your conclusion is to be resisted. But it is not. The principle is evidently *compound*, consisting of three essential particulars. 1. God had received the parties. 2. They were conscientious. 3. Their peculiarities were not subversive of any existing Divine law.\* Now, the apparent weight of your

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\* It will not avail to reply, that by the substitution of—“*not incompatible with a state of salvation,*”—for—“*not subversive of any existing Divine law,*”—the error would be truly designated, and the conclusion in favor of mixed communion: for, besides that this is necessarily included in the expression “*God hath received him,*” it is a *defective* definition, and its substitution would necessarily *exclude* a distinguishing feature of the principle on which the Apostle reasoned; viz. *That the peculiarities did not affect the righteousness pertaining to the existing dispensation.*



argument arises from the *partial* representation you give of this three-fold principle. You select *a part*, and reason from that as if it were the whole! On the contrary, we contend for the recognition of the principle *as a whole*, and feel no disposition to evade the conclusion. Reduced to a simple proposition, the conclusion is neither more nor less than this:—CHRISTIAN CHURCHES ARE TO RECEIVE ALL WHOM GOD HAS RECEIVED, WHO ARE CONSCIENTIOUS, AND WHOSE PECULIARITIES ARE NOT SUBVERSIVE OF ANY EXISTING DIVINE LAW. But what then? Does this rule enjoin the reception of pious Pedobaptists? Let us examine. Has God received them? He has. Are they conscientious? They are. Is their peculiarity subversive of any existing Divine law? In the opinion of every Baptist, *it is*. Consequently their reception into Baptist churches, would be, on the part of the receiving members, a *deviation* from the principle. Before the obligation of receiving Pedobaptists can be established from the precedent in the 14th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, the following syllogism must be conclusive reasoning:—

The toleration enjoined on the church at Rome is binding on all Christian churches.

But the toleration enjoined on the church at Rome was a reception of those whom God had received, who were conscientious, and whose peculiarities were not subversive of any existing Divine law.

Therefore it is binding on all Christian churches to receive those whom God has received, who are conscientious, and whose peculiarities *are* subversive of an existing Divine law.

But who does not perceive the sophistry of this; and that so far from *exemplifying*, it is a manifest

*departure* from the precedent you exhibit for our imitation: and such a *departure* as the Apostle most pointedly deprecates? The fallacy lies in confounding things essentially different. Surely, it is one thing to tolerate in a Christian church a matter of *indifference*, and quite another thing to tolerate the substitution of a human invention for a Christian ordinance. It is one thing to dispense with that uniformity which was *not* required in the primitive churches, and quite another thing to dispense with that which was *was* required: one thing to abstain from making *new* terms of admission, and quite another thing to deviate from the *old* terms, of Divine appointment, even though in both cases the parties be Christians. A profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and submission to Christian baptism, *were* the terms of admission; and unless we are at liberty to deviate from this Divine appointment, the profession of *whatever is essential to saving faith*, and submission to *whatever is essential to Christian baptism*, must be terms of admission still. The ancient diversities, my friend, were *not subversive of any existing law*, there not being any such law to which they could be referred. But the modern diversities *are* referrible to a law—a Christian law—a law of perpetual obligation, which law is *obeyed* by one party, and *subverted* by the other. The diversities, therefore, bear no analogy. But not only is your mode of reasoning illogical: it is equally *unscriptural*. As if on purpose to prevent the identical perversion with which you are chargeable, the Apostle, in the very context, expressly *distinguishes* the diversities then practised,

from the righteousness pertaining to the kingdom of God. "The kingdom of God, (says he,) is *not* meat and drink, *but* righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And to the same purpose, even in relation to what had formerly been imperative, he addresses the church at Corinth: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; *but* the keeping the commands of God." What is this, my friend, but pointedly and studiously *exposing* the essential difference, which you as studiously *conceal*, between abrogated rites and things indifferent in themselves,—and existing Christian commands? If he had set himself expressly to prevent your perversion of his exhortation to the Romans, he could scarcely have written more pointedly. It is as though he had said, 'Do not mistake one part of THE PRINCIPLE on which toleration is enjoined. The points of disagreement between you, if observed conscientiously and charitably, *not being subversive of any law*, may be left to your own discretion. Each party is at liberty to eat meat or to eat herbs, to observe days or to disregard them, as his own judgment may dictate. But beware of abusing this toleration. Remember, though the kingdom of God—the Christian dispensation—consisteth not in *meat and drink*, it *does* consist in *righteousness*, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is imperative, therefore, that you "fulfil all righteousness," in the manner and order of the Divine appointment. And though circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, this cannot be pretended of *existing* Divine ordinances: the "keeping of the commandments of God" is imperative.' That

the Apostle made any special allusion to baptism, in distinction from other branches of the righteousness pertaining to the new dispensation, is not pretended; but that *the principle* on which he reasoned, *applies* to baptism, as a part of that righteousness, as a duty incumbent on all believers in the order of Divine prescription, must be obvious to every understanding. The duties belonging to the Christian dispensation, so far from being *confounded* with the peculiarities then under discussion, are exhibited in direct *contrast*: to treat them as *similar*, therefore, is preposterous, and diametrically opposed to the *principle* on which the Apostle reasons. *You* say the ancient and modern diversities are similar; *he* says they are dissimilar: *You* propose to treat them alike; *he* would have treated them differently. To argue, therefore, as *you* do, that, because a diversity of opinion and practice relative to things *indifferent* and *abrogated Jewish rites*, was no bar to church fellowship, therefore a diversity of opinion and practice in relation to an *existing Christian ordinance* is to be tolerated in our churches, appears to me, equally opposed to sound reasoning and to scripture principle, and eminently calculated to nullify the authority of the Christian Legislator.

*M.* My friend, you seem wonderfully partial to this distinction. "There is nothing, however, in reason or in scripture, from which we can infer, that to omit a branch of duty not understood, is less an object of forbearance, than to maintain the obligation of abrogated rites. Let my friend assign, if he is able, a single reason why it is less

criminal to add to, than to take away from the law of Christ ; to revive an obsolete economy, than to mistake the meaning of a New Testament institute. How will he demonstrate will-worship to be less offensive to God, than the involuntary neglect of 'a revealed precept?'—[*Reply*, 165, 166. *H.* 228.]

S. My friend, there is just *this* difference between will-worship and the omission of a branch of Christian duty. Of the former, we have an *example*, and perceive that it *was* tolerated. Of the latter there is *no* example ; and the pointed distinction instituted between the ancient diversities and the righteousness pertaining to the Christian dispensation, clearly shows, that had any such innovation been attempted, it would not have been tolerated. There existed a *reason* for the toleration of the former, which will not apply to the latter : the observance of obsolete rites was at that time *discretionary* ; but existing Christian commands are of *perpetual obligation*. It is tiresome to be obliged so frequently to advert to this distinction ; but the necessity arises from your persisting to consider and to treat as *similar*, things, between which there not only *exists* an essential difference, but which essential difference is most emphatically *expressed* by the Apostle himself, both in his Epistle to the Corinthians, and in immediate connexion with the very transaction to which you refer us. You must also allow me to observe, my friend, that your remarks are replete with misrepresentation. You contrast "the omission of a branch of duty not understood," with "maintaining the *obligation* of abrogated rites;" and representing the

Jew as *adding to the law of Christ*. But it is obvious, that the Jew was not allowed to maintain the *obligation* of his peculiarity: he was only permitted to *observe* it. Nor was he allowed to consider his practice as any addition to *the law of Christ*: both parties were expressly told, that meat and drink did *not* belong to the Christian dispensation. And you are equally incorrect, my friend, in relation to the *modern* parties. Neither are our Pedobaptist brethren the counterpart of the Jew, nor the Baptists of the Gentile. The believing Jew was tolerated on the express understanding that his peculiarity did *not* belong to the kingdom of God: but Pedobaptists insist that their ceremony *does* belong to the kingdom of God—that it is, in fact, Christian baptism. The practice of the believing Jew was not *a substitute for Christian obedience, and subversive of the law of Christ*; but, pedobaptism, yourself being judge, *is* a substitute for Christian obedience, and its abettors “make void the law of Christ by their tradition.” Nor are the Baptists similarly situated with the Gentile converts. *They* were not required to receive their Christian brethren without obedience to the very first command enjoined on a believer. *They* were not required to invert the “natural” and “prescribed” order of the Christian institutions. *They* were not required to shew their love to the brethren, by deviating from the order of their Lord’s commission—the perpetual law of the Christian church. *They* were not required to destroy the unity of the church, by the admission of two baptisms. Whatever diversities existed, the primitive churches were neither required nor permitted to tolerate

any practical deviation from the law of Christ. In that respect, there existed the most perfect uniformity.

*M.* On the contrary, my friend, we have "an instance of men's being tolerated in the primitive church who neglected an express command of Christ, and that of the highest moment. We must only be allowed to assume it for granted that the apostles were entitled by the highest right to be considered as members of the church which they planted, and of which they are affirmed to be the foundation. These very apostles, however continued, for a considerable time, to neglect the express command of their Master, relating to a subject of the utmost importance. It will not be denied that he expressly directed them to go forth immediately after the descent of the Spirit and to preach the gospel to every creature. Did they immediately attempt to execute this commission? From the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that they did not; that, for a considerable period they made no effort to publish the gospel except to the Jews; and that it required a new revelation to determine Peter to execute this order in its full extent, by opening the door of faith to the Gentiles. But for the vision presented at Joppa, from all that appears, the preaching of the word would have been limited in perpetuity to one nation."—[*Reply*, 171, 172. *H.* 230.]

*S.* It must be admitted, certainly, that the apostles and primitive Christians were some considerable time before they fully complied with the extent of their Lord's commission; but, that they are fairly chargeable with "*neglecting an ex-*

*press command*," is by no means a consequence. They were *not commanded* to go "immediately" to the Gentiles. It is remarkable, that neither are the facts of the case as they are stated; nor, if they were, would they reach the position in support of which they are adduced. Allowing that the facts were correctly stated, there are two important particulars to be shown, before the cases can, with any propriety, be considered analogous: 1. That the church *believed* that the apostles "neglected an express command of Christ." 2. That, with this conviction, they tolerated the apostles as "weak brethren," permitting their continuance in the church while they persisted in this neglect, simply because, though confessedly "weak in the faith," they were good men, whom God had received! But, my friend, the facts themselves are incorrectly stated. You presume "it will not be denied that Christ expressly directed his apostles to go forth immediately after the descent of the Spirit, and to preach the gospel to every creature." But it *is* denied that they were directed to go "immediately" to the *Gentiles*. You ask with an air of confidence, "Did they immediately attempt to execute this commission?" and triumphantly reply, "From the Acts of the Apostles, we learn they did not." But, my friend, notwithstanding this decided negative, I am bold to maintain that they *did*, and did *immediately* after the descent of the Spirit attempt to execute their Lord's commission. Allow me to ask, *What were their instructions?* That "immediately" after the descent of the Spirit, they should leave Jerusalem, and



travel by forced marches to the nearest seaport, and take their passage in the first ship bound to some remote heathen country, and there commence the gospel campaign, resigning their own countrymen to the just award of their crimes? No. Their Lord mercifully ordained, that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*" And, faithful even to the letter, as well as to the spirit of their instructions, they *did* preach the gospel among all nations, "beginning at Jerusalem." From the Acts of the Apostles we learn, that their Lord also appointed, that after the descent of the Spirit, they should be his witnesses, "both in *Jerusalem*, and in *all Judea*, and in *Samaria*, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." And these instructions they faithfully obeyed. As Mr. Kinghorn observes, "a large field was to be the scene of their labors *before* they went to the Gentile nations, and they occupied every part of it in its order." But, because they did not *invert* the prescribed order, and, regardless of their Lord's instructions to the contrary, *immediately* go among the Gentiles, they are accused, of neglecting an express command of Jesus Christ! Surely, my friend, on reflection, you will be disposed to withdraw the indictment. Passing that, as we decidedly disapprove of *your* application of the injunctions in the 14th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, it is but fair, both to you and to ourselves, to show that we consider the injunctions binding in relation to *similar* diversities—diversities *not subversive of any existing Divine law*. As a familiar, and not inappropriate illustration, suppose

some of the members of our churches were very tenacious for the religious observance of Christmas-day, and Lent, and Good Friday, and Easter, and Whitsuntide, or any other "Christian Fasts and Festivals," as they are designated; while others, not perceiving either precept or precedent for their celebration, declined thus to observe them; and suppose the parties were perpetually disputing on the subject—those who observe the days "judging" those who did not observe them, and those who declined to observe them, "despising" those who regarded them,—here the apostolic injunctions would be in point. He who observes these seasons religiously, observes them, we may charitably presume, *to the Lord*: while he who disregards them, recognizes the same principle—he declines to observe them religiously because *the Lord* has not enjoined their observance, either personally or by his representatives the apostles: and, as *neither peculiarity is subversive of any existing Divine law*, it is not, in itself, a disqualification for church fellowship. Since, then, we are prepared to receive the weak in the faith, in nearly the same circumstances as those to whom the exhortation was originally addressed, "how preposterous is it, (to adopt Mr. Hall's rebuke on another occasion,) to charge us with departing from the apostolic injunction. In the same circumstances, or in circumstances nearly the same, we are ready instantly to act the same part: let the circumstances be essentially varied, and our proceeding is proportionably different." The apostles tolerated men whose sentiments differed from their own, provided they did not refuse sub-

mission to existing Christian commands ; and so do we. They received, and exhorted Christian churches to receive the weak in the faith, whose errors were not subversive of the law of Christ ; and this is precisely the course we pursue. Prove that the apostles would have done more, and we will imitate their example. We will receive *all* whom God has received, who are conscientious, and whose errors are not subversive of the regulations which Christ has prescribed for the perpetual regulation of his church : but we do not feel at liberty to violate the trust reposed in us by a reception even of Christians to external church fellowship without obedience to that significant ordinance prescribed by our sovereign Lord as the mode in which all believers should profess their faith in him.

*M.* “Nothing can be more futile than the attempt to turn aside the edge of our reasoning, by remarking that there is no mention of baptism, and that this is not the subject of which St. Paul is treating ; as though the Bible contained no general principles, no maxims of universal application, but that precise directions must be found for every possible emergence that in the lapse of ages may occur. Were it constructed upon this plan, the Bible must be infinitely more voluminous than the statues at large. It is composed on one widely different : it gives general rules of action ; broad principles, leaving them to be applied under the guidance of sound discretion ; and wherever it has decided a doubtful question, accompanied by an express statement of the principle on which the decision is founded, such explanation has all

the force of an apostolic canon by which we are bound to regulate our conduct in all the variety of cases to which it applies."—[*Reasons*, 34, 35. *H.* 298.]

S. But, my friend, it is *not* by remarking, that in the example before us there is "*no mention*" of baptism, that we attempt to turn aside the edge of your reasoning: it is rather by showing that a reception to church fellowship *without* baptism would be opposed to the *principle* on which the Apostle preceded, an essential feature of which was, that the peculiarities were not subversive of any command pertaining to the existing dispensation; plainly implying that *such* practical diversities would not have been tolerated. Surely, my friend, the "general rules" of the Bible were never intended to subvert, or to tolerate, the subversion of the particular laws of Christ! Are the scriptures at variance? Does the Lord Jesus Christ enjoin baptism on *every* believer, for a special purpose, at the commencement of the Christian life; and does the Bible furnish a "general rule" authorizing modern churches to receive members as if that injunction were obsolete? In what part of the Bible is this "universal maxim," this "general rule," this "broad principle," this "apostolic canon," to be found? Not in the 14th chapter of the Epistles to the Romans. *That* rule of toleration, judging, not merely from a solitary expression, but from the whole context, and from the tenor of the Apostles reasoning, is, as we have already observed, neither more nor less than *this*:—A reception of all whom God has received, who are conscientious, and whose practice is *not*

*subversive of any existing Divine law.* This is the rule, my friend, and we apply it in every case to which it is applicable. You, on the contrary, apply it, where, as a whole, it is *not* applicable, inasmuch as, yourself being judge, pedobaptism is subversive of an existing Divine law. Which acts most under the influence of "*sound discretion*," may be left to the decision of others. We are willing to receive all whom God has received in *obedience* to the Christian commission; but assuredly we have no authority, either from the example to which you refer us, or from any other part of scripture, to receive even those whom God has received, in *deviation* from it. We do not feel at liberty to set two scripture canons at variance; and to countenance the subversion of one by an unauthorized application of another.

M. But, in rejecting pious Pedobaptists, you are guilty of *withstanding God*. Allow me to remind you, my friend, of the Apostle Peter.—“When the Holy Ghost fell upon the Gentiles assembled in the house of Cornelius, though he had a short time before doubted the lawfulness even of eating with them, he considered it as such a seal of the Divine approbation, that he felt no hesitation in immediately admitting them to all the privileges of the church. He did not presume (with reverence be it spoken) to be stricter or more orderly than God. ‘Forasmuch (said he,) as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed, who was I, that I should withstand God?’—a question which I presume to recommend to your serious consideration. The principle on which he justified his conduct is

plainly this, that when it is once ascertained that an individual is the object of Divine acceptance, it would be impious to withhold from him any religious privilege. Until it be shown that this was not the principle on which he rested his defence, or that the practice of strict communion is consistent with it; we shall feel ourselves compelled to discard with just detestation, a system of action with St. Peter contemplated with horror, as *withstanding God*: and when I consider it in this just and awful light, I feel no hesitation in avowing my conviction that it is replete with worse consequences, and is far more offensive to God, than that corruption of a Christian ordinance, to which it is opposed. The latter affects the exterior only of our holy religion, the former its vitals: where it inflicts a wound on the very heart of charity, and puts the prospect of union among Christians to an interminable distance.”—[*Reply*, 86, 87. *H.* 198.]

S. But, in my opinion, a candid attention to the history will show, that *you*, not *we*, deviate from the principle and practice of the holy Apostle. Perceiving that God had received the Gentiles, he received them. But *how* did he receive them? As *you* would? No. But as *we* receive those whom God has received. He said, “Can any man forbid water, that these should not be BAPTIZED, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?” And this is the principle which *we* adopt. On the contrary *this* is the echo of *your* principle—“Can any man forbid that these should be received WITHOUT BAPTISM, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?”—a very different question from Peter’s, which we humbly recommend to

your serious consideration. True, the Apostle was *not* "stricter or more orderly than God:" but was he, I would ask, *less* strict, or *less* orderly, than his Lord's commission required him to be? Nor could we more grossly insult his memory, or traduce his character, than by insinuating that under *any* circumstances, he would have *deliberately deviated from his Lord's commission*, in deference to the erroneous conscience of any man whatever. He would not withstand God, by rejecting the believing Gentiles: for Jesus Christ was "Lord of *all*," of the Gentile no less than of the Jew. But he was not so enamoured with a spurious catholicism as to forget that he was "*Lord of all*," and as such entitled to the *obedience* of all. He therefore received them BY BAPTISM. And this is precisely the course we pursue. You set the scripture canons at variance: *we* contend for their union. Surely, it cannot be horrible to withstand God, and the very essence of Christian charity to withstand Christ! *Can* it be, that "the corruption of a Christian ordinance" is a less evil than a strict adherence to the confessedly "prescribed" order of the Christian institutions? and that a deference to *that* uniform practice of the apostles which was founded on *Divine appointment*, is far more offensive to God, than the subversion of a law of Christ, by the substitution of a human invention? Such, it would seem, is the 'unhesitating avowal' of our eloquent friend! "No wonder, (as Mr. Kinghorn very justly observes,) that Pedobaptists are so attached to Mr. Hall: they never met with such a Baptist before!"—My friend, we have considered the question of the Apostle, long ago: and the result is, a determination *to do as Peter did*, lest we

*should* withstand God.\* I am not aware, indeed, that there is a single example which we do not imitate, or a single injunction which we do not obey, in relation to the reception of Christians to external church fellowship. To recur, however, once more to your favorite precedent, (in the 14th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans,)—allow me

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to ask, Are you prepared to adopt *the whole* of the injunction? The Apostle, as was hinted at the close of our last Conversation, enjoined, not only that the weak in the faith should be *received*, but also that *the strong*, in deference to their weak brethren, should *abandon their own correct practice*: to which, it is presumed, you would never agree. But why not? It will not avail to reply, that the practice of baptism is not calculated to produce the same results as the participation of meat. It is very true, baptism is not quite so fascinating as mixed communion: there is not *much* danger of "the weak in the faith" being *baptized* against their conviction! But are you prepared to admit the *principle*, and to adopt *the whole* of the precedent in relation to the weak consciences of *all* whom God has received, *all* for whom Christ died? The question for consideration is,—*Would you intentionally neglect A CHRISTIAN INJUNCTION if your obedience would IN ANY WAY occasion a weak brother to sin?* That you would *not*, I firmly believe. But then you abandon your precedent. And why? Is not the injunction *applicable*? That is *our* argument. *We* say the Apostle did not allude to *such* peculiarities, and therefore consider any appeal to the injunction perfectly irrelevant. Will you say that the precedent applies *in part*? Then why not *entirely*?\* Is the "apostolic canon"

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\* On the contrary, WE SHOULD ADOPT THE PRECEDENT AS A WHOLE, in relation to SIMILAR diversities. For example, if a pious friend, conscientiously abstaining from certain meats on certain days, were to dine with us on any of those days, we should consider it a religious duty to avoid the introduction of any food of which *he* could not partake without violating his conscientious scruples. "It is good neither to eat flesh nor to

imperative in part, and discretionary in part? There is the most exact agreement throughout, both in the subject and the principle of reasoning. With what show of consistency then, can you, from this precedent, maintain the right of *receiving* "the weak in the faith," whom *God has received*; and refuse to *abandon* a peculiarity, the neglect of which you have agreed to tolerate, in deference to the weak consciences of those *for whom Christ died*? The Apostle enjoins *both* practices, and urges both on *the same principle*. Adopt the precedent then, as a whole, or reject it altogether. If the injunction to *receive* the weak in the faith be in point, the injunction to *abandon* the correct practice cannot be irrelevant. If the Apostle did not enjoin the *abandonment* of a Christian command under certain circumstances, neither did he enjoin the *toleration of the neglect* of such a command. *Whatever it was*, the neglect of which he tolerated in the weak brother, *that practice* was to be abandoned by the strong in the faith. It will not avail to reply, that it is one thing to *unite in church fellowship* with those who neglect a Christian ordinance which they are *not* convinced is binding, and quite another thing *personally to*

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drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth." The principle may also be applied to certain *amusements and festivals and associations*, not in themselves sinful. Though *our* consciences might not upbraid us, yet if our compliance would in any way occasion a *brother* to commit sin, certainly we ought to deny ourselves a gratification, which otherwise we might innocently enjoy. But to apply the principle to any CHRISTIAN INJUNCTION, is subversive of Christianity. And yet it *must* apply to Christian institutions, or its application to the present controversy is a PERVERSION of the apostle's meaning.

neglect what we believe is a Christian duty ; and that many who approve of the former would shrink from the latter. We can easily believe they would. But WHY? *We have not any more SCRIPTURAL authority for the former than we have for the latter.* Do you appeal to the injunction under consideration? If that enjoins the former, it also enjoins the latter : if, on the other hand, it does *not* enjoin the latter, then neither does it enjoin the former. Once admit that it is applicable to the present controversy, and you must assert, not the lawfulness of mixed communion only, but *the duty of PERSONALLY DISOBEYING CHRIST, whenever obedience to his injunctions would in any way occasion those to sin "for whom Christ died."* If, on the other hand, to repel this conclusion, you remind us that the apostolic injunction was *not* intended to apply to such diversities, that is *our* argument, and is conclusive, not only against personal disobedience, but likewise, as far as this injunction is concerned, against *the lawfulness of mixed communion.*

*M.* I am sorry, my friend, that we cannot agree. There is one point more to be discussed—the *tendency* of our respective systems. I cannot but think that yours is as impolitic as it is repulsive. On the contrary, "the generous confidence" imparted in mixed communion, appears, to me, eminently adapted for the insinuation of our sentiments on baptism.

*S.* "Whatever is right, is wise." But if mixed communion be, as I believe, a deviation from the rule prescribed by Christ for the regulation of churches, "to the end of the world," then it cannot be politically wise. Still, as you believe it to be right, I am ready to consider whatever you may advance in support of its policy.

*M.* Then this, in connexion with the impolicy of strict communion, shall form the subject of our next, and final Conversation.

## CONVERSATION VII.

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A STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE COMMISSION OF CHRIST, IN THE FORMATION OF OUR CHURCHES, NEITHER BIGOTRY NOR FOLLY: AND A DEVIATION FROM IT, IN DEFERENCE TO MODERN ERROR, NEITHER CHARITY, NOR CHRISTIAN WISDOM.

## ANALYSIS.

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Churches not at liberty to displace a Christian ordinance. Mr. Hall's shield against Pedobaptist ridicule and clamor doubly serviceable. Strict Baptists made the scapegoats of all Christendom. Spirit and manners of the age. Impotent violence. Dr. Dwight's protest against the undervaluation of baptism. Serious evils which Baptists unnecessarily court, by forming mixed communion churches. The church at Oxford. Mixed communion and mixed membership. The Rev. Christmas Evans, and his noble determination. Mixed communion bridge, &c. A candid proclamation. Shrewdness of a Bristol Pedobaptist. Facts *versus* theory. Bunyan and the church at Bedford. Dr. James Foster. Three specimens from Mr. Gile's Letters to Mr. Hall. Christ expects churches, no less than individuals, to adhere to his commission. Strange, that a Baptist should pursue with eagerness the complete extinction of Baptist churches ! The candid appellation of *bigot*. Call us names, but spare our churches. *Mixed Communion*, (though not a term of salvation !) a term of admission into modern churches. They reject none but infidels, heathens, and pious Strict Baptists ! What now becomes of Mr. Hall's leading position ? Either that or his mixed communion churches must be abandoned. A difficult task, for those who alter the terms of communion. Romantic scenery, in the East and West. Correct judgment and good feeling of a Pedobaptist Missionary. Conclusion.

## CONVERSATION VII.

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*M.* If, in glancing at the *tendency* of our respective systems, I can show that mixed communion is favorable to the prevalence of our views of baptism, surely you will be a little more pleased with it than you have hitherto appeared.

*S.* Undoubtedly, my friend, I am desirous of promoting the practice of Christian baptism; for I believe it is the very first act of allegiance which Christ requires of all his disciples: but neither do I believe that your system is calculated to accomplish so desirable an object; nor, were such a result demonstrable, could I approve of the expediency you propose to adopt. We are not at liberty, I conceive, to *displace* a Christian ordinance from the position which *Christ* assigned it, or to form *churches* opposed to the principles of our Lord's commission, with a view to the individual practice of the ordinance itself. In the promotion of the Redeemer's kingdom, means must unquestionably be employed; but, assuredly, He who "hateth robbery for a burnt offering" cannot be pleased with an expedient so derogatory of his just authority. This, my friend, is *my* view of the question. Still, as you believe mixed communion is lawful, I shall listen with attention to any observations you may be disposed to make.



*M.* Then allow me, first, to direct your attention to the inexpediency of strict communion. "The first effect necessarily resulting from it, is a powerful prejudice against the party which adopts it. When all other denominations find themselves lying under an interdict, and treated as though they were heathens or publicans, they must be more than men not to resent it; or if they regard it with a considerable degree of apathy, it can only be ascribed to that contempt which impotent violence is so apt to inspire."—[*Reasons*, 41. *H.* 301.]

*S.* But if Pedobaptists "*resent*" our conduct, they resent that in us which, (with a few modern exceptions,) they themselves practise: and if they feel "*contempt*" of what you designate our "impotent violence," it would better become them to inquire, whether it is not equally chargeable on themselves. Whatever qualities belong to strict communion are as attributable to them as to us; they, for the most part, equally with ourselves, declining to unite in church fellowship with any who, in *their* opinion, are unbaptized. Whatever stigma, therefore, it may please *you* to inflict, *they* cannot apply any epithet to our practice which will not rebound on themselves. I fear you have again forgotten the testimony of our friend, Mr. Hall; who tells us that the Strict Baptists and the Pedobaptists "both concur in a common principle, from which the practice deemed so offensive is the necessary result." It is *his* opinion, too, that "this may suffice to rebut the ridicule, and silence the clamor of those, who loudly condemn the Baptists for a proceeding, which, were they but to change their opinion on the subject of

baptism, their own principles would compel them to adopt.”—[*Reasons*, 6. *H.* 285.] But, my friend, you grossly misrepresent us. We do not treat our Pedobaptist brethren as “heathens or publicans;” but as *Christians*, whom we shall welcome to the Lord’s table immediately on their compliance with what *we* believe the Lord himself, the Founder and Governor of the feast, has been pleased to enjoin as a *previous* duty. They *know*, and some among them *acknowledge* this to be our feeling towards them: they do not reproach us, as *you* do, with treating them as “heathens or publicans.”\* And why, my friend, should you designate our practice “impotent violence?”

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\* Unhappily, (such is the contagion of a great example,) this Christian candor is becoming more rare and limited. Before the revival of this controversy, some dozen years ago, nothing was easier than to convince intelligent Pedobaptists that, however stupid we were in not being able to discern that their ceremony was Christian baptism, still, that was the sum total of our offence. Since then, however, they have studied in a new school; and their proficiency is truly astonishing. They have made two important discoveries: that Christian baptism is a trifle, and that the crowning sin of the Strict Baptist is a position maintained by their own body from time immemorial, and by most of them to the present day!! The following specimen, selected from half-a-dozen pages of a Review of certain publications on both sides of the present controversy, will serve to illustrate the SPIRIT AND MANNERS OF THE AGE—of—what shall we call it?—liberality and candor?

“Gold—silver—liberal—Christian world—victory—great powers—comprehensive views—intellectual giant—generous—acute understanding—ingenuous and noble ardor—inspirations of genius and of truth—rare assemblage of excellencies—countercharm of intolerance—genius of emancipation—enlightened instructor—enlightened and benevolent efforts—temperate and mas-

Of what "*violence*" are we guilty? and wherein is that alleged violence "*impotent*?" Is a strict adherence to the order of our Lord's commission, and keeping the ordinances "as they were delivered," to be designated "*impotent violence*?" If it be, it is a violence in the exercise of which we are sanctioned by apostolic commendation: and if not, then you, with all your pretensions to superior candor, are chargeable with applying to our practice, *violent* epithets, as undeserved as they are *impotent*.

M. "We are incompetent judges of the light in which our conduct appears to those against whom it is directed; but the more frequently we place ourselves in their situation, the less will be our surprise at the indications of alienation and disgust which they may evince. The very appellation of Baptist, together with the tenets by

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terly production—palm of victory—lucid—powerful—great judgment—Christian spirit—well sustained argument—considerable acumen, and invincible force—f forbearance—transcendant—illustrious name—halo of glory."

"Iron—clay—intolerance—human presumption—insignificant and rapidly-decreasing party—sectarian aggression—contumely and disdain—pigmies—arrogant assumption of infallibility—excommunicating—pernicious errors—ignorance, pride, and intolerance—mental and spiritual bondage—chain of prejudices—torrent of ungrateful abuse—enslaved people—ignorance and bigotry—rancorous hostility—blinded by prejudice—impervious to all arguments—exasperated—close the gates—hurl defiance—intolerate position—not the show of argument—weakness—puerility—infantile talents—feeble assailant—great ignorance—immeasurable illiberality—foulest charges—paw of the bear—'deplorably imbecile and narrow'—'thick-skinned monsters of the ooze and the mire, which no weapon can pierce, no discipline tame.'"

which it is designated, become associated with the idea of bigotry ; nor will it permit the mind which entertains that prejudice, to give an impartial attention to the evidence by which our sentiments are supported. With mingled surprise and indignation they behold us making pretensions which no other denomination of Protestants assumes, placing ourselves in an attitude of hostility towards the whole Christian world, and virtually claiming to be the only church of Christ upon earth. The power of prejudice to arrest the progress of inquiry is indeed to be lamented: nothing could be more desirable, than that every opinion should, in the first instance, be judged of by its intrinsic evidence, without regard to the conduct of the persons who embrace it: but the strength and independence of mind requisite to such an effort, is rather to be admired than expected. There are few who enter on the investigation of theological questions in that elevated state; secret antipathies or predilections will be sure to instil their venom, and obscure the perception of truth and the suggestions of reason."—] *Reasons*, 42, 43. *H.* 301, 302.]

S. My friend, we deny the charge of "placing ourselves in an attitude of hostility towards the whole Christian world." But we *do* claim, (and of this presumption, *you*, equally with ourselves, are guilty!) we *do* maintain that Baptist churches are the only churches in the world "who keep the ordinances *as they were delivered*." And if this is to subject us to "indications of alienation and disgust," and to occasion the mingled emotions of "surprise and indignation," so be it; we are not careful to shun the honest avowal of our princi-

ples. If our Pedobaptist brethren allow your misrepresentations of our conduct, and their own misconceptions and "secret antipathies," to "instil their venom, and obscure the perception of truth," the blame does not lie at our door. If we *were* as bigoted as some of our liberal friends are pleased to represent, or ten thousand times more so, the word of God is as true, and obedience to the laws of Christ as imperative, as if we were more liberal than the most liberal of all the liberals within the widest pale of the catholic church.

*M.* But, "by the stern rejection of the members of all other denominations, until they have embraced our distinguishing tenets, what do we propose to effect? to intimidate, or to convince? We can do neither. To intimidate is impossible, while there are others far more numerous than ourselves, ready to receive them with open arms. The hope of producing conviction by such an expedient is equally groundless and chimerical; since conviction is the result of evidence, and no light whatever can be pretended to be conveyed by interdicting their communion, unless it be that it manifests our intolerance. We propose to extirpate an error, and we plant a prejudice; and instead of attempting to soften and conciliate the minds of our opponents, we inflict a stigma."—[*Reasons*, 43. *H.* 302.]

*S.* Who, but yourself, my friend, could ever imagine, that, in declining to receive Pedobaptists to our communion, our object was either to "intimidate," or to "convince?" Our object is to "keep the ordinances as they were delivered," regardless of "new forms of error, and new modes

of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth." If we are under a delusion, convince us ; but, by applying to us epithets, as undeserved as they are wounding, reproaching us with consequences to which our system does not necessarily lead, and impugning, not only the validity of our arguments, but the integrity of our motives,—while you propose to extirpate what you believe to be an error, *you* "plant a prejudice;" and instead of attempting to conciliate the minds of your opponents, you "inflict a stigma." Such expedients, my dear friend, will neither "intimidate" nor "convince;" but they *may* alienate the heart.

*M.* But, "you do all in your power, to place our Pedobaptist brethren beyond the reach of conviction. Since it is unreasonable to expect, however attractive the ministry, that a pious Pedobaptist will stately attend where he must despair of ever becoming a member, and of ever enjoying the privileges to which every serious person is supposed to aspire: he attaches himself, as a necessary consequence, to a connexion in which there is no such impediment, but, where he is certain of hearing nothing but what will foster his prejudices, and confirm his error. Thus he is excluded from the only connexion where the arguments for adult baptism are stated, and is exposed to the constant operation of an opposite species of instruction."—[*Reasons*, 44. *H.* 302.]

*S.* And what a prodigious disadvantage! For, seriously, unless the subject of baptism were introduced more frequently than it is at present, he might, in some of our congregations, attend constantly, from January to December, without once

being instructed either in the nature or the requirements, the mode or the subjects, of this interesting Christian ordinance.\* We never introduce the subject but when we baptize: nor is it then uniformly discussed controversially; and if it be, the statement is sometimes accompanied with apologies and concessions, eminently calculated to neutralize the truths, which, in spite of the most liberal pretensions, *will* force an utterance from the lips of the preacher, and an entrance into the *judgments* of the hearers. This, in some churches, is the state of things at present; and he must be a very superficial observer of human nature, who should gravely affirm that a union with Pedobaptists would produce an improvement. The probability is, that from delicacy to their feelings, the subject would be consigned to oblivion; or, if occasionally lightly touched, the most cogent arguments would be blunted, by the simple circumstance of some of the members having been

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\* "It is not unusual, (says the late Dr. Dwight,) for a minister of the gospel to devote twenty-four sermons annually, to the consideration of the Lord's supper. On baptism, at the same time, ministers rarely preach. Why such a difference is made between two institutions of Christ, invested with the same authority, solemnity, and influence, I am unable to determine. But, whatever be the ground of this distinction, I am satisfied it cannot be a good one."—[*System of Theology*, Serm. 156.]

It is a most fortunate circumstance, that this pointed remonstrance, equally applicable to some of our churches, proceeded from the pen of a Pedobaptist! It contains not, of course, the smallest particle of bigotry! Without replying for his Pedobaptist brethren, or supposing that the Doctor wished for exactly twenty-four baptismal sermons per annum, the writer cordially acquiesces in the spirit of his protest against that marked distinction between the two institutions, and that undervaluation of the ordinance

received, avowedly as unbaptized. They will have learnt a lesson, which it will be well if they ever forget—not only that they are eligible to admission into heaven in *agreement* with the Divine rule, (John iii. 16.)—but also that they have a right to a place in the churches of Christ on earth in *deviation* from a Divine rule, for the regulation of ministers and churches “to the end of the world.” (Matt. xxviii. 19.) In vain will you maintain that your sentiments are *true*, while you practically admit that they are *unimportant*. Besides, it may not be improper to remind you, that having once admitted your Pedobaptist brethren as members of your churches, it will be manifest injustice to require that they shall listen to *your* views of baptism, without allowing them the privilege of a *reply*. They will have as good a right to introduce *their* sentiments, and *their* practice into the church, as you have to introduce *yours*. Now, either by an inglorious silence on both sides, the truth, on whichever side it be, will be com-

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of baptism, which characterizes some of our brethren. Besides the tendency of mixed communion to produce this result, there is another injurious custom, which is common, perhaps, to most Baptist churches—the system of deferring the administration of the ordinance until several candidates present themselves; a system for which the only plea generally advanced is—convenience! But apart from the injustice of this mode of procedure to some of the candidates, it is obvious, that the administration of the ordinance when believers presented themselves, without waiting for several more, while it would be in agreement with the primitive practice, would greatly conduce to restore the ordinance to that scriptural eminence, from which, partly owing to the infrequency of its administration, and partly in consequence of the depreciating influence of mixed communion, it has so lamentably fallen.



promised ; or by the admission of *both* parties, as even-handed justice undoubtedly decides, to the privilege of defending each his peculiarity; the pulpit, from which nothing but the truth ought ever to emanate, will become the arena of conflicting sentiments, and a powerful instrument in the promotion of antipathies, discords, and schisms—schisms, be it remembered, a thousand times more injurious than a formal separation. In open controversy, whether from the pulpit or the press, there is something manly, and fair, and honorable. But there is nothing more pitiful, or more annoying to the feelings, or more subversive of Christian affection and the exercises of social religion, than occasional, unexpected, uncalled for hints from the pulpit, in favor of *any* practice, concerning which the members of a church are nearly equally divided in opinion, and to which the dissentients can never have the privilege of replying. The uniform triumph and exultation of one party will be death to the other ; and, whatever be the result in relation to the subject of dispute, an incurable wound will be inflicted on the very heart of charity. On this principle, it appears manifestly *improper* to introduce the subject of baptism to a church composed of Baptists and Pedobaptists. You could not honorably introduce one side of the controversy only. Common fairness requires that all the members shall possess equal privileges ; and, to avoid the most flagrant injustice towards one party, either truth and error must be published from the same pulpit, and a Christian command and a human invention be practised in the same church ; or both parties must enter into a compact, either to banish into the land of forgetful-

ness, or to observe "without the camp," each his peculiar reproach. To permit each party publicly to vindicate his sentiments, (not to mention that one must necessarily disseminate error,) would be a glaring violation of your favorite Apostolic precept—"Receive ye one another, *but not to doubtful disputations.*" For one party to arrogate the exclusive privilege of defending his practice, would be flagrant injustice to the other. And for both parties to agree to consign their peculiarities to the shades, or to observe them without the recognition of the church, would be an unworthy sacrifice of principle on the shrine of a suspicious and precarious affection; and the declaration of one part of "the counsel of God" would be systematically restrained. And truly, my friend, how either of these expedients is calculated to convince or to edify, I am totally at a loss to perceive.\*

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\* On the mischievous internal tendency of the system, the late venerable Abraham Booth, in his *Apology for the Baptists*, pp. 131, 132, 1812 *edition*, introduces some pointed interrogations and remarks, evidently drawn from personal observation. And in a modern most interesting piece of biography, we are, with a candor which exceeds all praise, presented with a highly instructive exemplification, in the early history of the church at Oxford, under the pastoral care of the late amiable and excellent Mr. Hinton. Sincerely and cordially attached to the principle of mixed church-fellowship, this good man experienced, in his own person, some of its almost inevitable evils. Although the ordinance of baptism was not at that time administered at Oxford, but at Abingdon, to which place also the arguments in favor of Christian baptism were principally confined; yet, because a principle of Christian integrity would not allow the entire exclusion of the

*M.* But "he who was really solicitous to extend the triumphs of truth, would surely leave nothing unattempted to break down the rampart of preju-

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subject from the pulpit at Oxford, its introduction for the first time, in 1790, (ten years after the formation of the church,) proved "a source of dissatisfaction:" And no wonder; for instead of complimenting his Pedobaptist hearers on the involuntariness of their error, Mr. Hinton had the candour to relate some causes which had come under his own personal observation. "Our brethren," says he, "will allow that the prejudices of education, together with the fear of being singular, and of incurring ridicule, operate very strongly against our sentiments. I have found not a few, who have acknowledged themselves afraid to pursue the subject of believers' baptism, lest they should be convinced of its obligation; and some who even allowed that Scripture is very much in our favor, but who, having formed their connexions, and not liking a public disavowal of their former sentiments, have neglected what they at least suspected to be their duty. This, (I speak seriously, and without the least exaggeration,) I have found to be the case with many of my acquaintance."

Early in the same year, too, an individual instituted "a complaint that Mr. Hinton had *catechized*, or improperly questioned, a gentleman of Pedobaptist connexions, who wished to join the church. This complaint, however, the church discountenanced. But, about five years after, a reason assigned by our highly esteemed friend, in favor of a removal, presents an unequivocal indication that the offences complained of were now become more general, and attributable, not, as formerly, to the discontent of an individual, but to the system. "I cannot," says he, "be free in my ministry without giving offence: the congregation is of so MINGLED a nature, that I find it impossible to escape censure, either from Baptists or Pedobaptists—from Dissenters, or friends of the Establishment."—*Biographical Portraiture of the late Rev. James Hinton, M. A. of Oxford, by his Son, the Rev. J. H. Hinton, M. A.* Part II. Ch. iii.

It is rigidly due to the Biographer, who is one of the

dice, and, by making the nearest approaches to his opponents, consistent with truth, avail himself of all the advantages which a generous confidence sel-

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most candid and honorable of our opponents, briefly to notice the distinction of which he reminds us, between mixed *communion* and mixed *membership*. We are fully sensible of the difference, and that the history of the church at Oxford is a specimen of the latter; an appeal to which, therefore, in these pages, will, it is presumed, appear perfectly justifiable, on the consideration that it is mixed *membership* for which Mr. Hall so strenuously pleads. The subject being introduced, however, it ought not, perhaps, to be dismissed without a few words, (additional to Note, p. 40.) as to the propriety of the distinction itself. It is the decided conviction of the writer, that there is no *scriptural* authority, for either mixed communion or mixed membership. But if there *be* any scriptural authority for the former, is there not the same authority for the latter? The distinction itself has no foundation in Scripture. The reception of the weak in the faith, for instance, to whatever kinds of diversities it may apply, included, we presume, full church membership. If not, which party were members of the church?—and which only communicants? If it be replied, that some things are lawful which are not expedient, we would ask, Is the reception of the weak in the faith one of these things? On the contrary, it is an apostolic injunction, and not a question of expediency. *We* say the precept does not apply to such diversities as are subversive of a standing law of Christ—and act accordingly: our opponents believe it does. But some of them obey it in part only, *rejecting* from church membership the weak in the faith, whom they *receive* to a church ordinance! But the apostolic precept enjoins both or neither. If it enjoin mixed communion, it also enjoins mixed membership, with its train of evils; or, rather, for the preservation of peace, with an ABSOLUTE SILENCE on the subject of dispute! If, on the contrary, it do not enjoin such an union with Pedobaptists in church membership, neither does it authorize their reception to communion in a church ordinance.

dom fails to bestow, for insinuating his sentiments, and promoting his views."\*—[*Reasons*, 46. *H.* 303.]

\* "*Rampart of Prejudice.*"—We are perfectly willing to break down this, and every other barrier to communion, of human origin; but the barrier in the present instance, as far as we are concerned, is of Divine origin. If, indeed, Christian baptism were "a little punctilio," a mere trifle, then we might displace it. But we dare not displace a Christian barrier. On this subject, the Rev. Christmas Evans, "the apostle of the principality," has some very pertinent observations in his characteristic style. Delighted with the idea of universal Christian communion, the venerable man convenes a General Congress, and exhorts Christians of every communion to make a sacrifice of *what is their own*. He finds there are two principal barriers—the Baptists and the Pedobaptists. "Willing, (says he,) to do every thing in my power, to promote a general communion of all Christians, I took my pickaxe in my hand, and went up to the Baptist barrier. Pausing a little, to examine the wall, I perceived something divine emanating from it! But, being resolute, I said, 'Certainly, it is better to pull thee down, than that thou shouldst be the occasion of keeping thousands from communion whom I expect to meet in heaven!' Directly I lifted up my pickaxe to break down the barrier; but I imagined in one moment's time, that twelve personages of heavenly extraction confronted me, hard by the wall, exclaiming, with loud but heavenly voices, 'Mortal man, hold thy hand! What art thou about to do? Wilt thou presume to sacrifice what is not thine own? Art thou so full of temerity as to attempt the demolishing of this barrier which Heaven erected, and which was sanctioned by the Messiah to be the visible wall of separation between his kingdom and the world—and that, not only during one century, but to the end of time? Know, vain man, that he expects to find this barrier in good repair at his second coming.'—Their expostulation pierced my soul; my heart failed within me; and I exclaimed, 'I will never touched this sacred wall of separation, for the sake of any man living, let my veneration be what it may for his talents and piety.'—Notwithstanding, I was not con-

S. So, then, your mixed communion churches are so many beautiful gardens into which Pedobaptists are to be allured—so many enchanted

vinced that no sacrifice could be made on the other side. Immediately, therefore, we went to the other separating wall, commonly called Pedobaptist barrier. Then said I, 'Dear brethren, I have been attempting the pulling down of the Baptist barrier on my side, and to sacrifice it for the promotion of general communion among the godly; but these heavenly personages who are with me, prevented me, by asserting that the wall was not of human invention, but according to the counsel of God. Brethren, cannot you make a sacrifice of your barrier, without offending these noble personages of the court of heaven? They allege that there is no written patent in the volume of inspiration, for your wall.' They, however, refused, and pleaded, for their barrier, its great antiquity; asserting, that they had uninspired papers, proving its existence in the second century! They produced large bundles of analogical reasonings—the act passed for circumcision, &c. They said the silence of the Bible was in favor of their barrier, as it did not contain any prohibition against the wall,' &c., &c., &c. 'Dear brethren,' I replied, 'It was not from any blind attachment to the barrier on my side, that I refused to destroy it; but because it is according to the written patent.—It is presumed you can demolish the barrier on your side, without incurring the displeasure of Heaven. Pray indulge no undue attachment to what is not written; but sacrifice it for the communion of the godly.' Still they refused; and I said, 'It is now easy to see where the blame lies, for keeping up the bar to communion.' Let us by all means make sacrifices towards promoting general communion; but we must go to our own fields to get victims! We have a great many fields, full of suitable sacrifices, had we a heart to bring them to the horns of the altar—men's-tradition field—human-invention field, &c., &c. Let us catch all the animals feeding in these, and bring them to the Great Union altar, fixed on the summit of Zion's mount! Let us sacrifice them there, for the interest of the general communion of the godly!—My brethren, it is not proper to

islands, to which, in condescension to their *weakness*, you all kindly give them access, by a newly invented, finely-wrought, reticulated bridge,\*—

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take the lambs and the bullocks which are the right of another, (Isa. lxi. 8) and to kill them to feed the passion for mixed communion. It may appear easy work for us to enter the premises of the Great Lord of the soil, taking his property to sacrifice—but then the groves will be equally honored as the temple, and the union will be promoted at the expense of sacred things.”—*[Decision of a General Congress, 12—15.]*

Let it not be replied, that we are not required to *sacrifice* the ordinance: we *are* required to REMOVE IT FROM THE POSITION IN WHICH IT WAS PLACED BY JESUS CHRIST.

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\* The external appearance of this bridge is very beautiful, but we suspect the foundations; and at present it does not work so smoothly as we have been given to understand. The ornaments are showy, not solid: and we are not able to discover that it has received the sanction of “the Royal Letters Patent.” When its admirers produce that important document, and we have “obtained leave” from the Royal Commissioners, to build a bridge, then, indeed, we may appreciate it more highly. We must candidly confess, however, that we should feel rather ashamed to petition for a bridge; it would wear so much the appearance of a reflection on the King, who surrounded these ecclesiastical spots with water with a special design—that it should be passed *through*, not passed *over*. Besides, the present law resembles the laws of the Medes and Persians—it “ALTERETH NOT.” And to us it seems perfectly ridiculous, quite unworthy of *our* Sovereign, to make one law that *all* his loyal subjects should pass *through* the water, and another law permitting *some* of them to pass *over* it! Nothing would be wanting to complete the absurdity, but a third law in favor of *the remainder*, providing a patent mixed-metal tunnel, through which they might enjoy the privilege of passing *under* the bed of the river; and when the novelty of that should have subsided, a fourth, commanding the opening of the sluices, and the letting off the water altogether!

that you may with the greater facility "insinuate your sentiments, and promote your views!"—O that I had a voice that could be heard from one end of their community to the other. In common honesty, and for the credit of my denomination, I would proclaim, 'Ho, ye Pedobaptists! BEWARE OF MIXED COMMUNION CHURCHES! With a soft and persuasive eloquence you are invited to their communion; but be not deceived. Scarcely any thing would be more indignantly resented by the Baptists among them, than the insinuation that they attach less importance to the ordinance of baptism than their Strict Communion brethren. If, then, you have the slightest objection to hear your sentiments discussed, and your practice denominated "*a nullity*," do not flatter yourselves that you will escape this mortification by taking refuge in a mixed communion church. Beware of these diversified communities; for though probably you will not hear much of baptism from the pulpit, (indeed, you *ought not* unless you have the privilege of replying,) yet be it known to you, one *avowed* object of the Mixed Communion Baptist, in thus joining affinity with his Pedobaptist neighbors, is to extend and perpetuate his peculiarities; and, by bringing you into closer contact, to "insinuate his sentiments, and promote his views." BEWARE, THEN, OF MIXED COMMUNION CHURCHES!

*M.* Thank you, my friend! Then you admit that we *do* endeavor to extend and perpetuate our sentiments. Certainly, this is a concession I little expected from a Strict Baptist!

*S.* Nay, my friend; while I give you full credit for sincerity, I have neither affirmed that



you *would* take any pains to disseminate your principles, nor that such an attempt would be attended with success. I have simply reiterated your own avowal, that such is your *intention*. But you would, or you would not. If you *would* (to say nothing just now of the tendency of such a course to produce unpleasant consequences,) it is not enough that the intimation is made to *us*, as a *recommendation* of your system ; but the *Pedobaptists*, who might view it as an *objection*, should be especially apprised of your design, that they may not enter your enclosures ignorant of their danger. If you would *not* spontaneously introduce your views of this part of the mind of Christ, (which, notwithstanding your intention, is, I am inclined to think, the more probable supposition,) then *our* churches, in which there exists no temptation to withhold the truth on Christian baptism, would, in my humble opinion, be much better calculated than *yours*, to “promote the restoration of a Divine ordinance to its primitive simplicity and purity,”—“an honest solicitude for which (Mr. Hall tells us,) is not only innocent, but meritorious.”

*M.* On the contrary, “of the tendency of mixed communion to promote a more candid inquiry into our principles, it is scarcely possible to doubt.\*

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\* Facts speak louder than theory. Let the reader attentively peruse the following practical illustrations, and then judge of the *expediency* of mixed communion.

“The eminent John Bunyan, who zealously advocated the cause of mixed communion, seems to have had no great success in promoting the interests of the Baptists. We hardly ever find an allusion to the ordinance of baptism in his works, except in his controversial pieces, in which he practically undermines its authority. Nor was the effect of his favorite system conducive to the

Whether it would have the effect of rapidly extending the Baptist denomination *as such*, is less certain. For were that practice universally to

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spread of his opinion as a Baptist; for such was the state of the church with which he was long connected, that on his death they chose a Pedobaptist: and from the year 1688, in which he died, to the year 1788, when Mr. Joshua Simonds died, the ministers who succeeded him were *Pedobaptists*; except the last, who some years after his settlement with the church, changed his sentiments, and became a Baptist. This took place in 1772; but though Mr. Symonds continued at Bedford, it was '*on the conditions that he should not introduce the controversy into the pulpit, nor into conversation unless it was first mentioned by others!*' We have also been informed that one instance occurred in 1700, and another in 1724, in which the church refused to grant a dismission to members who desired to unite with two Baptist churches in London, because they were *strict communion churches*."—[*Kinghorn's Defence*, Pref. xv.]—The present pastor of the church at Bedford is a very respectable Pedobaptist; and, while we cannot but highly esteem his Christian character, we should think he can scarcely repress an occasional smile at the credulity of his eminent predecessor, the Apostle of mixed communion. The "*pilgrims*" in their "*progress*" from the "*House of the Interpreter*" to the "*House Beautiful*," are not now so "*orderly*" we presume, as they should be. *Some* of them are taken to the "*bath in the garden*,"—all, probably, who *spontaneously* desire it; but the Interpreter does not *instruct* them to "*go orderly*." He considers a kind of seal on their foreheads before they set out, as at least equivalent to the bath; and has adopted a Roman invention, of sealing *the children* of pilgrims, and, indeed, of some who are *no* pilgrims, if the parents are willing: in fact, he prefers this to the bath! And *this* is the result of BUNYAN's mixed communion!

"Dr. James Foster, who was more than twenty years pastor of the General Baptist church in Barbican, London, and who in his day advocated the cause of mixed communion, left the General Baptists, and accepted he

prevail, the mixture of Baptists and Pedobaptists in Christian societies would probably, ere long, be such that the appellation of Baptist might be found

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pastoral charge of the Independent church at Pinner's Hall, London. But, though he had pleaded the *expediency* of mixed communion as the means of leading men to consider what the Baptists had to urge in defence of their sentiments, yet Mr. Grantham Chillingworth informs us, that in conversation with him upon the point, 'he could not pretend to say, that *one single person* who was in communion at Pinner's Hall before his going over to them, had since submitted to that institution, [of baptism,] or shewn the least inclination to be baptized.'"  
—[*Kinghorn's Defence*, Pref. 16.]

Mr. Giles, in his very interesting *Letters to the Rev. Robert Hall*, [63—65.] presents us with some striking exemplifications of the tendency of both mixed and strict communion. "The following, (he says,) have come under my own observation:—

"In a town in the south of our island, a most serious division took place in an Independent congregation. Sixty or more of its members separated from their brethren, attended the Baptist meeting-house, and expressed their desire to join in communion with the church. The Baptists, from a wish to evince their brotherly affection, and from a confident persuasion that such an act of liberality would not fail to be followed with conviction, at least among some of these mistaken brethren, agreed to alter their terms of communion, and receive them. Some of their members, and some of the neighboring ministers and brethren, remonstrated with them, and assured them that the result would prove to be opposite to what they expected. But these remonstrances were disregarded, and the liberal plan adopted, with a confident persuasion, of its success. This mixed fellowship continued for, I believe, a year and a half, or more; but *not one of the Pedobaptists could see baptism to be of sufficient importance to submit to it!* At last, some Independent minister, from the kindest motives, no doubt, attempted, and really effected, a reconciliation between the remaining members of the church and the brethren that had seceded, the result of which was, that *every one* of them re-

not so properly applicable to churches as to individuals, while some more comprehensive term might possibly be employed to discriminate the

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turned to his own fold, leaving the Baptists without the accession of *a single member from them!* There is no one but would rejoice in such a reconciliation; but it assuredly proves, that your doctrine of expediency is not so certain in its results as you would have us believe. I think I might venture to affirm, from what I have experienced, that, had this church stood firm to its own previous system, some of those Pedobaptists would have been induced so to examine the subject of baptism, that conviction would have followed, and that they would have been baptized. I am acquainted with another church at ———. This church, for the purpose of receiving a few unbaptized persons, altered its constitution. The consequence was, that as soon as the alteration was made, as many baptized brethren withdrew as unbaptized persons joined. This church has tried your plan for some years; and, strange as it may appear, though it retains these Pedobaptists in communion, it has resolved *never* to receive another *unbaptized* person into fellowship. The reason for this extraordinary resolution, given both by the minister and some of its members, was, that they had tried and proved the inexpediency of mixed communion, and on that *inexpediency alone*, had resolved in future to prevent it. This, Sir, is another matter-of-fact against the expediency of your theory. The last that I shall mention, and which I had related to me very recently by the pastor of the church, forms the opposite of the two cases already stated. At ———, an unhappy division took place in an Independent congregation, which resulted in the ultimate removal of its pastor. Many of this congregation united in worship with the Baptists. The Baptists retained their accustomed terms of strict communion; and several of these Pedobaptists have *been baptized, have joined the church*, and now rank amongst its most pious, active, and useful members. These cases, Sir, confirm the truth of the adage, 'Honesty is the best policy;' and of the maxim, that 'What is morally wrong, can never be politically right.' "

views of collective bodies. But what then? Are we contending for names, or for things? If the effect of a more liberal system shall be found to increase the number of those who return to the primitive practice of baptism, and thus follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, he must be possessed of a deplorable imbecility and narrowness of mind, who will lament the disappearance of a name, especially when it is remembered, that whenever just views on this subject shall become universal, the name by which we are at present distinguished will necessarily cease. An honest solicitude for the restoration of a divine ordinance to its primitive simplicity and purity, is not merely innocent, but meritorious; but if the ultimate consequence of such an improvement should be to merge the appellation of a party in that which is derived from the Divine Founder of our religion, it is an event which none but a bigot will regret.”—[*Reasons*, 46, 47. *H.* 303.]

S. But if an honest solicitude to perpetuate the *individual* practice of baptism be meritorious, it cannot be right in *ministers* and *churches* to deviate from the Divine injunction, and the universal practice of the first churches, in the reception of members. Is compliance with the Divine rule the duty of individuals, and non-compliance the privilege of churches? Allow me again to remind you of our friend Mr. Hall. You will excuse me—but really, I cannot compliment you as a very apt disciple. You may recollect, perhaps, that he says, “the duty of churches originates in that of the individuals of which they consist; so that when we have ascertained the sentiments and principles

which ought to actuate the Christian in his private capacity, we possess the standard to which the practice of churches should be uniformly adjusted." [*Reasons*, 39. *H.* 300.] If, then, individual Christians are under an obligation to obey the commands of Christ, the organization of churches can never have been designed to nullify that obligation. It is no more the duty of individuals, than it is of churches, to "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Do the oracles of God vary? Are they chargeable with duplicity? Do they make one annunciation to the individual inquirer, and another to the community? On the contrary, their testimony and requirements are uniformly the same. That which is required of one, is required of all. And to organize *churches* upon a principle systematically allowing the non-observance of that ordinance which Christ himself commissioned his ministers to require *prior* to church fellowship, is inflicting a wound upon him "in the house of his friends." Our Pedobaptist brethren, generally, are chargeable with no such inconsistency. They *do* require, in every member of their churches, what *the church* believes to be Christian baptism. It is the Mixed Communion Baptist, and until very lately he alone, who maintains that submission to baptism was "*prescribed*," as a duty prior to church fellowship, and yet systematically provides for its non-observance, in the constitution of the church! My friend, all the primitive churches, you must admit, were *Baptist* churches; and surely they were constituted on principles authorized by the Great Head of the church. And who is possessed of sufficient temerity to impugn

that authority? For a *Baptist* to view with complacency, and pursue with eagerness, not the perpetuity, but the annihilation, *as such*, of all the Baptist churches in the world, appears to me an anomaly which no terms can describe, a mystery which no skill can unravel, and a deviation from the Christian commission, the standing law of the Christian church, which no ingenuity, no eloquence, no talents can vindicate. With respect to the candid appellation of "BIGOT," it is now become so stale and so general, that its sting is extracted—its venom neutralized. It is a missile thrown with perfect harmlessness by infidels, liberals, and formalists, at saints of every communion; by "Rational Christians," and some of a superior order, at the Calvinist: by the Pedobaptist at the Baptist: and finally, the weapon with which *you* have been assailed, you pluck from your bosom, and ungraciously, but with inimitable dexterity, fling at your Strict Communion brother! What a difficult lesson it seems for even Christians to learn, that a steady adherence to a practice for which *scriptural reasons* are assigned, is *not bigotry*! But, my friend, charge us with "imbecility and narrowness of mind," and welcome: the way of truth is a "narrow way," in ritual, no less than in moral observances. Call us "bigots," if you please, or any other opprobrious epithet which human ingenuity can devise, and which the men who are "*fierce for moderation*" may applaud: but, by all that is sacred, we beseech you not to violate the scriptural constitution of our churches. If, in the organization of our churches, a rigid adherence to the perpetual law of the Christian church is to

be stigmatized as *bigotry*, we glory in the epithet ; we will bind it as a diadem on our brow ; and descend into the grave exulting that we have been counted worthy of the reproach of Christ.

*M.* "It were well, if the evil resulting from the practice of strict communion were confined to its effect on other denominations. If I am not much mistaken, it exerts a pernicious influence on our own. Were it consistent with propriety, it would be easy to adduce exceptions : individuals have come within the narrow range of my own observation, whose temperament has been so happy, that they have completely surmounted the natural tendency of their principles, combining the greatest candor towards Pedobaptists, with a conscientious refusal of their communion. Such instances, however, must, in the nature of things, be rare. Generally speaking, the adoption of a narrow and contracted theory, will issue in a narrow and contracted mind. It is too much to expect that a habit of treating all other Christians as aliens from the fold of Christ, and unworthy of a participation of the privileges of his church, can be generally unaccompanied with an asperity of temper, a proneness to doubt the sincerity, to censure the motives, and depreciate the virtues of those whom they are accustomed to treat with so much rigor. Conceiving themselves to be a highly privileged class, as the only legitimate members of his church, they are almost inevitably exposed to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think ; and, founding their separation, not on that which distinguishes the followers of Christ from the world, but on a point in which



Christians dissent from each other, they are naturally tempted to attach superlative importance to the grounds of difference. The history of the present controversy affords a melancholy confirmation of these remarks; for the few who have ventured to appear on the liberal side of the question have, for the most part, been assailed by ungenerous insinuations, and odious personalities. Their claim to be considered as Baptists is very reluctantly conceded; and the part they have taken has been imputed to the love of popularity, or to some still more unworthy motive."—[*Reasons*, 47—49. *H.* 304.]

S. I assure you, my friend, I deprecate as sincerely as you do, all such unhallowed expedients. The weapons of the Christian warfare ought not to be carnal. But it surely can be no information that the conduct to which you allude is not the exclusive sin of either party. With honorable exceptions on both sides, individuals of each party have been 'verily guilty concerning their brother.' Such things ought not to be. Even retaliation, for the purpose of irritating an opponent, rather than of exposing his system, or his manner of defending it, is totally indefensible. The Strict Baptist ought not to render "railing for railing." It is a violation of the law of Christ. But surely it is with peculiar infelicity that *they* complain, who have set the example and maintained the pre-eminence. My friend, whatever may be the character of our respective systems, candor and bigotry are qualities of the mind, not tendencies of a creed. Whichever system be adopted, yours or ours, *he that is candid will*

*be candid still, and he that is a bigot will be a bigot still.*

*M.* But "some churches in their zeal have lost sight of their own principles, and substituted the doctrine of strict communion as a term of admission, instead of the ordinance of baptism. Others have refused the privilege of occasional communion to such as have been known to sit down with Pedobaptists at the Lord's table."— [*Reasons*, 49. *H.* 304.]

*S.* Not exactly so, I presume. Even if these churches do make strict communion a term of church fellowship, it certainly does not follow that they have "lost sight of their own principles." On the contrary, it involves a contradiction to say that they require strict communion "*instead of the ordinance of baptism*," seeing that the latter is necessarily included in the former. Whether the practice to which you allude be defensible, or not, it is with a remarkably ill grace that *you* complain—you, my friend, whose deliberate, settled, uniform, strenuous aim, is, to organize churches, whose *distinguishing term of admission shall be MIXED COMMUNION*! You may not, indeed, be chargeable with 'losing sight of *your own* principles;' but mixed communion churches *are* chargeable with losing sight of *scriptural* principles, by substituting mixed communion "*as a term of admission, INSTEAD of the ordinance of baptism!*" Far be it from me, to reiterate the unkind accusations which some of our liberal opponents have heaped upon us, for retaining *baptism* as a term of admission; for they are as unjust as they are unkind, and ought to be retracted. But just suppose, for

a moment, that they *were* applicable! Then, my friend, the odium and the obloquy which you have endeavored to attach to *strict* communion churches, would inevitably attach to *your* communities! Do we retain the ancient *Baptist* barrier? you remove it from the position in which it originally stood, and erect in its place, a modern, *mixed communion* barrier. Do we close the doors against our *unbaptized* brethren? you, to receive them, necessarily exclude many of your *baptized* brethren. Are those Pedobaptists to be pitied, who reside where there is only a *Baptist* church? alas! what kind-hearted Christian is there, to

“Pity the sorrows of a STRICT old man,  
Whose trembling limbs have borne him to *your door*!”

Say not, he may wait till your more illustrious guests are served, and that then you will come and attend to him in your out-house! HE WILL NEVER SUBMIT TO SUCH AN INDIGNITY! Say not, he might enter your presence-chamber, *if he would*; the whole amount of that liberty being a permission to enter on *your own terms*—a privilege, it is presumed, which even the papal hierarchy has never refused. But, my friend, we freely concede to you *the right* of enacting your own terms, in your own churches, *if you believe they are scriptural*; and, whatever be our opinion of the terms themselves, we should be ashamed of applying to you a title of the opprobrium which you have endeavored to fasten upon us, for precisely the same conduct. But, surely, it cannot be commendable to make *mixed communion* a term of church fellowship, and criminal to retain *baptism* as such a term. It is

true, there is *one* particular, and only one, in which the cases are not parallel—the Baptists among you institute that as a term of admission into your *churches* which they do not believe is essential to *church fellowship*! They will commune with *us*, notwithstanding we are “sinners above all sinners;” but we must consent to *mixed communion*, if we desire to cross the threshold of *their* sacred enclosures! Not that we should for a moment *complain* of this, of our friends believed mixed communion were *essential to church fellowship*: in that case they *ought* to make it a barrier, and if they did not, they would expose themselves to the contempt of every upright mind. But, to make *that* a term of admission into your *churches*, which you do not believe is essential to *communion in a church ordinance*, is surely, a *needless*, not to say *unnatural* separation, from your Baptist brethren, in favor of pious Pedobaptists. You include all, my friend, except *infidels, heathens, and pious Strict Baptists*! And now, let me ask, what becomes of Mr. Hall’s leading position—that “NO CHURCH HAS A RIGHT TO ESTABLISH TERMS OF COMMUNION, WHICH ARE NOT TERMS OF SALVATION?” Is *mixed communion* a term of salvation? Then why make it a term of admission into your churches? Allow me to inquire, my friend, ‘whether the Strict Baptist, dying in the possession of his supposed error, is disqualified to join “the spirits of just men made perfect;” to mingle with “the general assembly of the church of the first born.”’ If this is not affirmed, let mixed communion churches reflect on the enormous impropriety of pretending to render a Christian society an enclosure more sacred, and more diffi-

cult of access, than the abode of the Divine majesty—and of investing *themselves* with the prerogative of repelling from their communion a Kiffin, a Booth, a Fuller, or a Pearce, whom the Lord of glory will welcome to his presence.' If our friend *Mr. Hall* were consulted, would he not indignantly reply, "Transubstantiation presents nothing more revolting to the dictates of common sense!"—[See *his reply to Kinghorn*, p. 265.\* *H.* 271.] So then, after all the clamor about candor and liberality, about non-essentials and minor-points, the "conclusion of the matter" is just this: that MIXED COMMUNION CHURCHES are a violation of *Mr. Hall's leading position*, and a striking exemplification of the identical evils alleged against BAPTIST CHURCHES!! Do our churches make that a term of admission, which is not a term of admission into

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\* We trust we shall never again be reminded of a SECOND TABLE. From our Pedobaptist brethren, if we needed such an accommodation, we should receive it as an act of Christian kindness, and cheerfully return the civility if they desired it. But, from Baptists to Baptists, such a proposition is MOST UNLOVELY. [Mr. Hall recommends to churches that can muster a majority of votes in favor of mixed communion, to open the doors of the church, "throw down the barriers, and admit pious Pedobaptists without hesitation." And if the minority continue to adhere to their strict communion principles, he proposes to have a second table set for them by themselves, where they can "receive the Lord's Supper apart," and "enjoy that state of separation and seclusion which they covet." [*H.* 151.] If there could be weeping in heaven, would not the apostles weep over such "new modes of aberration from that Gospel rule which they gave to the churches, for keeping the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace" with "one Lord, one faith, one baptism?"

*Ed ]*

heaven? *So do yours!* Do our churches make that a term of admission which is not essential to salvation? *So do yours!* Nay, you *exceed* us in strictness; inasmuch as you make *that* a term of admission into *your* churches, which you do not consider essential to *church fellowship!* And what is the consequence? Why, one of two results is inevitable. Mr. Hall *must* abandon his leading position, *or* his mixed communion churches! If he adhere to his leading position, his mixed communion churches are not only "in danger," but must inevitably fall. If, on the other hand, he cling to his churches, he discards his leading position; and then all the fine arguments he has reared upon this frail fabric, against the constitution of *Baptist* churches, will immediately vanish! And even then, his churches are in imminent danger! For on what are they founded? On our Lord's commission, and the uniform practice of the first churches? On the contrary, mixed communion is confessedly an *inversion* of "the natural and prescribed order" of the divine institutions, and a *departure* from the example of the apostles, in deference to "new forms of error, and new modes of aberration from the paths of rectitude and truth!" Baptism is a *scriptural* term of church fellowship; mixed communion is *unscriptural*. Baptism is of *Divine* origin; mixed communion, (a collateral branch of pedobaptism,) is of *human* invention. Surely then, those who make *mixed communion* a term of admission into their churches, are the very last men in the world who should become "accusers of their brethren," for retaining *baptism* as a term of communion. We do not "*alter* the terms of com-

munion." Faith and baptism are the *original* terms of church fellowship : but faith and mixed communion are an old and a *new* term ; and, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, a mixture of gold and clay. Mr. Hall assures us, [*Reply*, 255. *H.* 266.] that "he who *alters* the terms of communion, changes the fundamental laws of Christ's kingdom. He assumes a legislative power ; and ought, in order to justify that conduct, to exhibit his credentials, with a force and splendor of evidence, equal at least to those which attested the divine legation of Moses and the Prophets." Let the advocates of mixed communion do this, and the controversy will be decided. In the mean time, they surely cannot complain if we steadily adhere to the *old* terms.

*M.* My friend, I am weary of disputation. Leaving, therefore, "to those to whom it may be more grateful, the unwelcome office of exposing the infirmities of their brethren, let me close this subject by one more remark. In addition to all the other reasons for retracing our steps, we may, with great propriety, allege the spirit of the times, the genius of the age, distinguished, as it is, beyond all former example, by the union of Christians in the promotion of a common cause, and their merging their minor differences in the cultivation of great principles, and the pursuit of great objects. Instead of confining themselves, each to the defence of his own citadel, they are sallying forth in all directions, in order to make a powerful and combined attack on the kingdom of darkness. The church of Christ, no longer the scene of intestine warfare among the several denominations in-

to which it is cantoned and divided, presents the image of a great empire, composed of distant, but not hostile provinces, prepared to send forth its combatants, at the command of its invisible Sovereign, to invade the dominions of Satan, and subdue the nations of the earth. The weapons of its warfare have already made themselves felt in the East and in the West ; and wherever its banner is unfurled, it gathers around it, without distinction of name or sect, "the called, the chosen, the faithful," who, at the heart-thrilling voice of Him whose vesture is dipped in blood, and who goes forth conquering and to conquer, rush to the field, unmindful of every distinction but that of his friends and foes, and too eager for the combat to ask any other question, than, Who is on the Lord's side? Who?"—[*Reasons*, 49, 50. *H.* 305.]

S. This is a brilliant picture, my friend ; but who, that is generally acquainted with the Christian world, will venture, calmly and deliberately, to pronounce it *correct*? That there is more *show* of candor than ever, is undeniable—save and except towards the unfortunate Strict Baptists! It is to be hoped also, that there is more *genuine* candor among Christians of different denominations. Christian candor, however, does not consist in undervaluing an ordinance of Jesus Christ ; but in thinking highly of Christians, *notwithstanding* their minor differences. The union of Christians of all denominations, at home and abroad, is undoubtedly a most delightful feature of the age : but the glory of this union would be essentially impaired, if it involved the slightest sacrifice of truth and Christian allegiance. Happily, Chris-



tians in general are as tenacious of what they believe to be Christian truth, as of Christian love; and whenever love to the brethren shall require the sacrifice of a single Christian duty, it will from that moment cease to be *Christian* love. But it is not true, my friend, that Christians have learned to view their peculiarities as unimportant. Even Christian missionaries, in the zenith of their philanthropic zeal, are not blind to the difference between love to the brethren "for the truth's sake," and the compromise of what either they or their brethren believe to be Christian truth.\* They unite in the evangelization of the world, but they do *not*, nor *can* they, without a change of sentiments, unite in the constitution of their churches. Your picture of the missionary field is perfectly utopian. The various Christian sects, both in the East and West, form their churches, each on its own principles. The Episcopalian does not sacrifice a single iota of his church establishment: the Methodists form their communities on the principles prescribed by their Conference: the Pedobaptist administers to the children of his

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\* Take the following as a specimen. At ———, a Baptist Missionary Station, in the East Indies, a Pedobaptist Missionary, unexpectedly present, was invited to preach. He did so; and after the service, it being ordinance day, he was respectfully reminded that the church considered baptism as a term of communion. He supplied the inference—and what then? Did he turn upon his heel, and raise a dust and a whirlwind about *caste* and bigotry, little punctilios and intolerance? No. He understood the principle, and appreciated the motive. His reply was, "*I cannot blame you: I have always thought the contrary practice unjustifiable in Baptists.*"

converts what he believes to be Christian baptism : while the Baptist, with at least equal propriety, retains *his* peculiarity. To what purpose, then, but to dazzle and confound, is all this flourish of trumpets and waving of banners, about union and unanimity ? Christian union there is ; but unanimity is the figment of a glowing imagination. There is as much Christian union at home as there is abroad ; and as little unanimity abroad as there is at home. Christians never did, and while they believe their peculiarities are sanctioned by Christ, never will, without so far violating their Christian allegiance, “merge their minor differences in the cultivation of great principles, and the pursuit of great objects.” They will rather unite in “the cultivation of great principles and the pursuit of great objects,” *notwithstanding* their “minor differences.” Certainly, they will not “*confine* themselves, each to the defence of his own citadel ;” but that each party, when assailed, will *defend* his own citadel, is as evident as that they unite their forces against the common enemy. They do *not* abandon “the distinction of name or sect.” They are *not* “unmindful of every distinction but that of friends and foes.” They are *not* “too eager for the combat, to ask any another question, than ‘Who is on the Lord’s side ? Who?’” In the formation of their churches they *do* ask other questions : and their differences are precisely the same, in number and importance, as ever they were. Your glowing representation is a poetic fiction : it fails in every particular but one—their cordial union in the evangelization of the world. But in this union, the Strict Baptist is as ardent to

join, as the most liberal of his Christian brethren. My dear friend, let us not impose upon ourselves, and in our eagerness for *union*, forget that "*Christian communion*" is not only a union of Christians ; but a union in Christian obedience, on Christian principles, from Christian motives, and with the sanction of the Great Head of the Christian church. It is not necessary, either that you should be of my sentiments, or that I should be of yours, in order to Christian communion. Let us both act as we conceive agreeably to the mind of Christ, each being open to conviction : and if we cannot be of one judgment, "let each be fully persuaded in his own mind." And let both show their "love to the brethren," not by deviating from the Christian commission, in compliment to modern error, however conscientiously that error may be maintained ; but by an interchange of every friendly feeling, and friendly intercourse, which involves no sacrifice of what either party *believes* to be the mind of Christ.

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# REVIEW,

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*A Letter on Communion at the Lord's Table ; addressed to a member of a Baptist Church. By Rev. EDWARD D. GRIFFIN, D. D. President of Williams College.*

The whole of this letter we transfer to our pages, that our readers may be furnished with a specimen of the arguments and representations which are commonly employed by the opposers of restricted communion.

*Williams College, March 25, 1829.*

Dear Sir,

In our late interview you professed yourself an advocate for open communion, and requested me to give the reasons which operate in my mind in favor of that practice.

I do this with the more pleasure because some of my earliest associations attached me to the members and preachers of your communion, and awakened feelings of kindness which have accompanied me through life. I have repeatedly exchanged pulpits with your ministers. I have dismissed members from my church to join your churches. I have always considered baptism by immersion as valid ; and were I imperiously called upon by the conscience of an applicant, and could do it without offence to others, I should have no hesitation in administering the ordinance in this form. In short, I regard your churches as churches of Christ. The question is—Is it reasonable in them so to regard us ?

The separating point is not about the subjects of baptism, but merely the mode. If we could be considered as fairly baptized, our Baptist brethren certainly would not exclude us merely because we apply the seal to infants. Many greater mistakes (allowing this to be one,) are made by those whom we do not exclude from our communion.

I agree with the advocates for close communion in two points: 1. That baptism is the initiating ordinance which introduces us into the visible church; of course, where there is no baptism there are no visible churches: 2. That we ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, and of course, are not church members, even if we regard them as Christians. Should a pious Quaker so far depart from his principles, as to wish to commune with me at the Lord's table, while he yet refused to be baptized, I could not receive him; because there is such a relationship established between the two ordinances, that I have no right to separate them; in other words, I have no right to send the sacred elements out of the church.

The only question then is, whether those associations of evangelical Christians that call themselves churches, and that practise sprinkling, are real churches of Christ; in other words, whether baptism by sprinkling is valid baptism.

In my subsequent remarks, I will assume (though I do not admit,) that immersion is the better form of baptism, and that we have misjudged as to the most suitable mode. The question is, Is this mistake so radical as to destroy the validity of the ordinance? I offer the following reasons against the exclusive system.

1. In the nature of things the validity of the ordinance cannot depend on the quantity of water, for the end is essentially answered by less as well as by more. Water, if the ocean were applied, could not wash out sin. It is only an emblem; an em-

blem which, voluntarily used, is a profession of faith in a purifying Saviour. Now if water be applied to the body, (though only to a part,) as an emblem of purification, and as a profession of faith, and from sincere respect to the authority of Christ, what more can an emblem do? What more could immersion do, unless to render the emblem still more significant?

2. We have authority for saying that an emblem of purification applied to a part of the body, is as effectual as if applied to the whole body. It is found in what our Saviour said to Peter, on the occasion of washing his feet: "Peter saith unto him, thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me. [Meaning, If I do not produce that inward cleansing of which this is an emblem.] Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit;" (John xiii. 8—10) that is, is stamp'd with a full emblem of universal purity.

3. If the exact form of baptism were essential to its validity, the form would have been so clearly defined that no honest mind could mistake it. The old dispensation was a dispensation of ceremonies, and therefore the validity of its ordinances depended on an exact adherence to the forms prescribed. Nadab and Abihu were slain for burning incense with fire taken from the hearth instead of the altar. (Lev. x. 1, &c. Numb. viii. 4.) Everything therefore was minutely and most explicitly prescribed, even to the putting of the blood upon the tip of the ear, and to the least pin and fringe of the tabernacle. Moses was commanded to make "all things according to the pattern" shown him in the mount. (Heb. viii. 5. with Exod. xxv. 9, 40.) The new dispensation is distinguished with greater light. If, therefore,

the validity of any of its ordinances depended on their precise form, that form would have been as clearly defined at least as the forms of that darker dispensation. But,

4. There seems not to be a single form under the new dispensation so precisely defined, but that different denominations may and do practise differently without transgression. There is a great variety in the manner of their keeping the supper, administering baptism, performing prayer, and conducting all the forms of public worship. Unless, therefore, we condemn the whole, or nearly the whole church, we must admit that the validity of no ordinance under the gospel depends on its precise form. And this might be expected from a dispensation known to be spiritual, and not a dispensation of ceremonies; that is to say, a dispensation under which spiritual things are exposed in their own naked nature, and not set forth chiefly by pictures, on the exactness of which the whole exhibition depends.

In regard to baptism, none will pretend that the form is expressly prescribed, like the forms under the old dispensation. The disputants about the mode rely, on both sides, on the history and incidental remarks found in the New Testament. But laying aside the baptism of John, which, we hold, did not belong to the New Testament dispensation, (for a testament is not in force till after the death of the testator, Heb. ix. 15, 16.) and the baptism of Christ, which was received from John, and which we hold, was only his ordination to the priestly office; laying these aside, and confining the attention to that baptism which was instituted after the death and resurrection of the "Testator," and was administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and the mode is left so uncertain, that the most honest minds may be supposed to differ about it. If two perfectly holy men had

been brought up in the centre of the earth, and on arriving at the surface should have a Bible put into their hands, and be requested to tell how the apostles baptized; and one should happen to fall upon the case of the Eunuch, and the other upon the scene at Pentecost, (where 3,000 seem to have been baptized by eleven men in a single afternoon, on the top of a high hill, in the centre of a populous city, and far from any river or brook deep enough for immersion,) there would be an equal chance that they would bring in different reports. Could things be left so uncertain if the validity of the ordinance, and the very existence of a visible church, depended on the precise form of baptism?

5. If nothing but immersion is baptism, there is no visible church except among the Baptists. But certainly God has owned other associations of Christians as churches. He has poured his Spirit upon them in their assemblies, and what is more decisive, at the table of the Lord; and has communed with them, and built them up by means of that ordinance, which, were they not churches, it would be profanity to approach.

What is a church? It is a company of believers, in covenant with God, essentially organized according to the gospel, holding the essential doctrines, and practising the essential duties. If you demand more, you may not find a church on earth.

Now here are associations of true believers, (our Baptist brethren will allow this,) who have entered into covenant with God, and sincerely observe all his ordinances *as they understand them*, and differ in nothing from the Baptist construction but in a *mere form*, and maintain all the essential doctrines, and spread around them the savor of the Redeemer's name by their holy examples and evangelical efforts, and are owned of God by the effusions of his Spirit, and are among the chosen instruments—are a great majority of the chosen instruments—to



carry the gospel to the heathen. And after all, are they to be disowned as churches of Christ?

6. If our Christian associations are not churches, our preachers are not church-members—are not baptized—and therefore have no right to preach, and certainly are not ministers of Christ; (for how can one be an officer of the church who is not a member?) and therefore have no right to administer the Lord's supper, (to say nothing of baptism,) and are guilty of awful profanity in doing this. And yet these profane intruders into holy things, instead of being driven from the earth like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, are owned of God, are made the chosen instruments of promoting revivals of religion, of saving the souls of men, of spreading the gospel at home, of sending it to the heathen, and of doing more than half that is done to extend the kingdom of Christ on earth. And they are owned as lawful preachers, even by the Baptists themselves, who come to hear them, and whose ministers exchange pulpits with them.

7. The spirit of love and union which Christ inculcated upon his disciples, and by which the world was to know that God had sent him, binds evangelical churches with each other. The spirit has made a wonderful advance within the last thirty years, and is one of the leading characteristics of the present day, and has come in with those other glorious changes which all Christians ascribe to God, and which are manifestly putting things forward towards the millennial state. And this spirit, according to all prophecy, must go on in increasing and banish the hideous spectre of bigotry from the world, before the happiest period of the church can be ushered in.

A noble advance has been made by our Baptist brethren in England. Many advocates for open communion have there risen up, among whom stands conspicuous the celebrated Robert Hall. In

America, at the head of the liberal class stood the late excellent Dr. Stillman, of Boston, who was beloved by all the churches in that city, and respected by Christians throughout the United States.

8. Bigotry, which is a prejudiced zeal for party distinctions, is a party spirit in religion; and a party spirit, whether in religion or politics, is a selfish spirit. It is a setting up of mine against thine. Selfishness will certainly array itself against my argument. It is always giving undue importance to those points in which our denomination differs from others, not only because it is ours, but in order to shut our adherents in by a sort of impassable gulf. All the depravity of religious men, unless much enlightened, tends this way. Good men ought therefore to be always on their guard against this gravitation of their corrupt nature, and always struggling after that generous spirit of disinterested love which will embrace all that belong to Christ.

You are at liberty, according to your request, to publish this for the use of your friends.

With sincere wishes for your happiness, and for the prosperity of your churches,

I am, dear Sir, your friend and brother,

EDWARD D. GRIFFIN.

We are glad that Dr. Griffin does not lend the weight of his authority to those who maintain the untenable position that baptism is a matter of little importance. His well known decision, and independence, and confidence in vindicating what he deems to be the truth, would prepare us to expect from him something definite and tangible.

This letter traces the controversy respecting the Lord's supper to the right source; namely, error

respecting baptism. Baptism it expressly maintains to be, "the initiating ordinance which introduces us into the visible church;" it also asserts "that we ought not to commune with those who are not baptized, even if we regard them as Christians."

From this "relationship established between the two ordinances," it might be anticipated that the principal effort of Dr. Griffin, in order to maintain the propriety of open communion, would be to show that immersion is not essential to the performance of baptism; in other words, that something else besides immersion is valid baptism. Here the author of the letter and the Baptists are at issue. As this is the hinge on which the controversy turns, we trust an examination of this point will not be deemed out of place.

In our subsequent remarks, we shall proceed upon the principles avowed by Dr. Griffin respecting the importance of baptism, and its connexion with the due observance of the Lord's supper. Yet we shall not consider ourselves responsible for the sweeping conclusion, that, "where there is no baptism, there are no visible churches." As, however, Dr. Griffin has given his explicit sanction to the propriety of this conclusion, we hope that hereafter, though it has sometimes been exhibited as an appalling result of the Baptists' peculiar sentiments, it will not be selected as an instance of unquestionable bigotry. For ourselves we have never thought it necessary to draw such a conclusion. It has always appeared to us sufficient to say, that those communities of Christians who have abandoned the primitive practice in respect to bap-

tism, are churches not in a state of order, so far as the positive ordinances of the gospel are concerned:

Before examining the opinion respecting baptism, on which the chief remarks in this letter are founded, we wish to correct an important error in one of its statements. This we do the more readily, because it is an error very extensively indulged, and yet one would think it a very obvious error. It is contained in these words: "The separating point is not about the subjects of baptism, but merely the mode. If we could be considered as fairly baptized, our Baptist brethren certainly would not exclude us merely because we apply the seal to infants." Now we ask, how is it possible that at this late day, any one should need to be informed, that the separating point regards the subjects of baptism as well as the manner in which the ordinance is to be performed? It is frequently said, nothing separates Baptists from Pedobaptists but a little water. The impression produced by this remark on a hearer who has not paid special attention to the matter, is very unfavorable: and it cannot be wondered at, that the frequency of such remarks should have spread far and wide an opinion that members of Baptist churches are most unreasonable in their practice. Be it known, then, that we have as much solicitude respecting the question, To whom may baptism be administered? as respecting the question, What is baptism? Should we make a distinction in regard to importance between the two questions, we should not hesitate to say that the former question far exceeds in importance the latter. Much as we are pained, that the outward perform-

ance of a Christian ordinance should be perverted and displaced, we are far more seriously concerned, that unconscious babes should be considered suitable candidates for an ordinance in a dispensation in which each one is required to act for himself, and in which intelligence and moral goodness are requisite in order to perform its duties and to enjoy its privileges. We know it has been said that baptism is not the act of the child, but of the parent in reference to the child. But where in the New Testament is the passage in which baptism is represented otherwise than as an act in which the individual baptized did for himself engage? Baptism is viewed by us as a most solemn act of worship; worship, not only in respect to the administrator, but especially and peculiarly in respect to the baptized person himself; a service, not of the parent or guardian of the baptized person, but of the baptized person himself. Indeed, we cannot regard that as valid baptism, which is administered without a profession of faith in Christ, made by the candidate himself. To us it would be just as great a perversion for infants and professed unbelievers to partake of the Lord's supper, as it is for them to be (as it is said) baptized.

Those, then, are in a great mistake, who represent their Baptist brethren as refusing to join with them in the Lord's supper on no other ground than simply because they have not been immersed. To substitute something else in the room of baptism, is a great and lamentable error; to admit individuals to a Christian ordinance, who know not, and who profess not to know what they do, is, (to say the least) an equally great and lamentable

error. Something more, then, than a little water, divides these two denominations. We separate from Pedobaptist Christians because by their using a little water instead "much water," they have divested baptism of a great part of its meaning; because by applying what they call a Christian ordinance to unbelieving and unknowing persons, they have still further departed from the meaning of baptism, and have lamentably obscured the spirituality of the gospel, and have created an imaginary relation between certain unsanctified persons and God; and because these errors produce sad misconceptions respecting the nature of the church. That must, then, be a very superficial view, which sees only a little water between these two portions of Christians. Let it not be said, baptism is merely an outward ceremony, and our opinions respecting it cannot be so very important. True, the performance of baptism is outward; but in order that baptism be properly and acceptably performed, there must be previously in him who receives it, a great moral change, which will ultimately pervade the whole character, and prepare the person for dwelling in the blessed regions of holiness. Unimportant as baptism may appear to some, we cannot resist the conviction that the Head of the church wisely appointed it, as also the other ordinance, to be a mark of distinction between the church and the world; and that outward though it be, yet correct opinions respecting it are of most salutary tendency in regard to the purity of Christian faith and practice; and that, if the ordinance of baptism had not been perverted from apostolic simplicity, a very large por-

tion of the errors which have most permanently afflicted the church, would have been avoided.

We must also correct another erroneous statement, intimately connected with that on which we have just been remarking. Dr. Griffin says, "The only question is, whether baptism by sprinkling is valid baptism." Here is an entire overlooking of qualification for receiving baptism, the profession of which in the person baptized, is essential to the due administration of the ordinance. We wonder not that the practice of sprinkling infants, and by this way either introducing them into covenant with God, or reminding the parent of his obligations to train up his child for God, or reminding him of the depraved nature of his child, and of its need of regeneration, should have removed from the minds of Pedobaptists, a regard for qualifications connected with the reception of baptism. But when they are arguing upon a question which must be settled by a reference to baptism, they ought not to leave out of view what Baptists conceive to be of essential importance in baptism; namely, the profession of personal faith in the Saviour. There are two questions, then, which should be asked,—whether sprinkling without a profession of faith in the Saviour, made by the person sprinkled, is valid baptism; and, whether sprinkling, though accompanied with such a profession, is valid baptism. When a believer receives sprinkling, on the ground of its being baptism, there is a very serious opposition to our views of scriptural truth; when an infant, or any unbelieving person receives sprinkling on the faith, as is sometime said, of the parent, or some other ancestor, or the guardian, or of the

church, there is a still wider departure from what we deem to be the representations of Scripture. Now since the opinions respecting baptism are the foundation of the difficulty respecting the Lord's supper, we claim that the whole ground of dissent in regard to baptism should be kept in view.

We have made these distinct explanations in this place, so that if, in the progress of the discussion, our remarks should be restricted to a part of the controversy, we yet may not be misunderstood.

Dr. Griffin attempts to prove that immersion is not essential to the performance of baptism. "In the nature of things," says he, is his first reason, "the validity of the ordinance cannot depend on the quantity of water, for the end is essentially answered by less as well as by more." The correctness of this assertion depends solely on the answer to the question, What is the end or design of baptism? A question, we hesitate not to say, the most important in regard to baptism; decisive of every point in controversy, whether respect be had to the manner in which the ordinance is to be performed, or to the subjects to whom it should be administered. Settle this point, and there will be no further occasion for dispute respecting baptism. Would every minister of Christ, in simplicity and godly sincerity, search the Scriptures in order to discover what is the design of this ordinance, or what purpose it is intended to answer; and would he follow into all its necessary consequences, the result of this investigation, there would soon be but one mind and one judgment among the stewards



of the mysteries of God. Would every person, about to make a public profession of religion, examine what the Scriptures say on this point, unbiassed by any extraneous considerations; and then, with unwavering confidence in God, act in accordance with the scriptural design of baptism, what a vast diminution would there be of that mental disquietude which so many experience at that tender and interesting period—and which even ministers of the Lord Jesus sometimes endeavor to remove by the unwarrantable representations that such a time is not suitable for examining the subject; that after having made a profession of religion, it can better be investigated; that baptism is non-essential; that it is a mere form of a ceremony; that one way is as good as another. Our hearts are pained when we think how even good men prevent disciples of the Lord from ascertaining and obeying his will; when we are compelled to think, that some who are appointed to be lights in the church, do really envelope in darkness the tender mind of a young convert who wishes to inquire, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

It is our honest conviction, that there are in the Bible, statements in regard to baptism sufficiently explicit to show what this service means. So plainly does the Bible seem to us to speak on this point, that we think no emendation necessary to make it speak more plainly. The author of the letter declares what he conceives to be the end of baptism. “It is,” he says, “only an emblem; an emblem which, voluntarily used, is a profession of faith in a purifying Saviour.” This language needs no comment:—baptism is “an emblem of purification;” and he who voluntarily uses it expresses his

“faith in a purifying Saviour.” From this representation of an uninspired man, we turn to the oracles of God, to the law and the testimony ; for if men, however venerable through age, or learning, or dignity of manners and station, or piety, “speak not according to this word,” we hold ourselves bound to desert their guidance.

When we first meet with baptism as performed under the authority of our Lord, mentioned in the Gospel by John, iii. 26, iv. 1, 2, and then go forward to the solemn period when he extended the commission and said, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ;” that is, baptizing them into the worship and service of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, the first thought that enters our mind is, that baptism was intended to separate from all others, and to collect into one body, all the truly pious. But while this general purpose was answered and was conspicuous even from the commencement, there were some peculiar ends to be accomplished, for which baptism had a peculiar significancy. Water being a purifying element, and bathing for cleanliness as well as for comfort, being customary,—Jesus also having come to save his people from their sins—how appropriate is baptism to express the idea of cleansing, of moral purification? In conformity with this design was the address of Ananias to Saul of Tarsus, when this persecutor of the church had become a disciple of the Lord Jesus. “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” To the same purpose, in immediate connexion with “putting off the body of the sins

of the flesh," by Christian circumcision, that is, by the renovation of the heart, the Colossians (ii. 11, 12,) are represented as having been "buried in baptism."

Is there any additional significancy in this rite? In the Acts of the Apostles, viii. 37, 38, occurs the account of the Ethiopian officer baptized by Philip. As a necessary antecedent to his receiving of baptism, the eunuch made the following profession. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." During the conversation between Philip and this man, a minute account appears to have been given of the character, the sufferings, and the consequent glory of the Lord. He was induced to believe in Jesus as the Son of God. A reference to Romans x. 9, will lead us to think that in this profession there was included the belief of a specially important event: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." In the act, then, of confessing the Lord Jesus, there is also implied a belief in his resurrection from the dead, and in his previous death and burial. That this object was always viewed by the primitive Christians in close connexion with baptism, we have the fullest evidence from Romans vi. 3. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ," or as his disciples, "were baptized into his death," or did by our baptism acknowledge his death as declared in the gospel? And that with this acknowledgment of the Saviour's death, there was also in baptism an acknowledgement of our duty to be dead to sin, and to lead a new life, is evident from the succeeding verse. "Therefore we are

buried with him by baptism into death ; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

In writing to the Colossians also, the apostle very distinctly brings to view this striking significance of baptism : (ii. 12.)—"Buried with him in baptism, wherein (in which emblem) also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, (or through faith in the power of God) who hath raised him from the dead."

In 1 Peter iii. 21, the same connexion between baptism and the resurrection of our Lord is exhibited. In the ark of Noah, "eight souls were saved by water ; the like figure whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God," that is, the profession of a conscience made tranquil towards God, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

With this view of the design of Christian baptism, how accordant is the remark of the apostle in the epistle to the Galatians, iii. 27. 'For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, [that is, as his disciples] have put on Christ,' that is, have entered into a very intimate union with Christ ; a union in regard to moral disposition, and in regard to the relation towards God as his children. How is this union represented ? Not merely by performing a ceremony, but by performing the appointed ceremony which symbolically represents him as having undergone a death on account of sin, and yourselves as having undergone a death unto sin ; a ceremony which reminds you of him as rising to a state of triumph and glo-

ry, and represents yourselves as rising to a spiritual and divine life.

Look now at the end of baptism, and say whether it is answered by less water as well as by more. One can hardly help exclaiming, How meagre is the account of baptism in this letter! How materially do our Christian brethren divest this ordinance of its significancy! How different are the considerations which they associate with baptism from those with which the apostles cheered and incited the early believers, whenever this ordinance supplied them with topics of remark! And we cannot help adding, how much ought Baptists to feel themselves peculiarly bound to cherish a mortified temper; to live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them, and into whose death they have been baptized; to Him who rose again, and in conformity to whose resurrection they have, by a most significant rite, acknowledged their obligation to walk in newness of life!

Baptism is more than a profession of faith in a purifying Saviour. It is also a profession of faith in a Saviour dying, buried, rising from the dead. Can the death, the burial, the resurrection of the Saviour be represented by less water, as well as by more? What person, when he sees a wet hand applied to a child's or an adult's forehead, or a few drops of water scattered on his face, is by this act reminded of a dying and a rising Saviour, and of the individual's death to sin, and resurrection to spiritual life? So entirely destitute of such significancy is sprinkling, that we wonder not at the acknowledgments which candid Pedobaptists make, and at the difficulty which others feel in refer-

ence to the above-quoted passages from the epistle to the Romans, and from that to the Colossians.

Since a mistake lies at the foundation of the argument we have been considering, the argument manifestly is of no force. The end of baptism cannot be answered, unless there be an immersion of the believer; hence immersion is essential to the validity of the ordinance. And hence we cannot regard as baptized, those who have not been immersed; and not regarding them as baptized, Dr. Griffin's own avowed principles will not permit us to unite with them at the Lord's table, even though we esteem them as Christians.

From this account of our opinion respecting baptism, it is manifest that it is viewed in very different lights by Baptists and by Pedobaptists. In our view, it sustains an intimate connexion with those events on which are suspended our dearest hopes, as candidates for immortality. So that when we think of the Lord Jesus, as delivered for our offences, and as raised again for our justification, our thoughts naturally recur to the time when we were buried in baptism—when we voluntarily submitted to an act which publicly marked us as dead to sin, and which publicly sealed our avowal of obligation, and our declaration of serious purpose to lead a holy life. And O, what a reproof is a remembrance of that hour adapted to convey to our hearts! Meditation on our having been baptized, suggests to our minds the fact that we have been buried with Christ by baptism into death, and the obligation, that “like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Connecting baptism thus with the history of Christ, and

with our obligations to be conformed to him, it cannot be surprising that we are always willing to converse respecting it, and that we desire all Christians to participate in correct views of it.

We mean not to intimate, that those whose opinions differ from ours respecting this ordinance, connect with it no practical considerations. But many of the considerations which they connect with it are such as the apostles did not present in connexion with baptism; and a part of those which the apostles did connect with it they omit. When we think of this fact, we wonder not at the long continued controversy; for the reasonings on the opposite sides proceed from materially different views, almost as if they had respect to disconnected subjects. The *design of baptism* should be the point in controversy. The design, in our opinion, is not the same as it is represented by Pedobaptists. How can the writer of this letter expect, then, that we should act according to the consequence which he draws from *his* opinion of the design? Let us all, in the first place, acknowledge the truth as to the scriptural design of baptism,—and we venture to promise that he and we will go hand in hand in observing all things which the Lord has commanded his disciples.

We would remark in passing, that the *Design of Baptism* has been so amply discussed in the sermon preached, Sept. 1828, by Professor Chase, before the Boston Association, and which has recently appeared in a third edition, that it seems to us unnecessary to enter more fully upon this subject. To that sermon we respectfully invite the attention of all who seriously wish to ascertain the truth.

The principle implied in the second reason of this letter, however true in general, is not appropriate to the matter in hand. For although "an emblem of purification applied to a part of the body is as effectual as if applied to the whole body," it by no means follows that the application of a few drops of water to a part of the body is valid baptism; because, however such an application might be an emblem of purification, it cannot be an emblem of the other things which enter into the design of baptism, and consequently it cannot answer the ends of baptism. To Dr. Griffin's use of the passage of Scripture introduced in this connexion, (John xiii. 1—10,) we have two objections to make. First, It was no part of our Saviour's design to communicate, in that passage, instruction respecting baptism. Secondly, In order to defend Dr. Griffin's explanation, there must be conceived to be in our Lord's remark to Peter, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet,' a strange mixing of figurative and of literal language; as 'He that is washed [that is, he that has experienced an inward cleansing] needeth not save to wash his feet,' that is, literally to wash a part of his body.

Let the passage speak for itself. As one of the closing acts of our Saviour's life, he wished in a striking manner to correct the disposition which his disciples had manifested in the question, Who shall be greatest? Accordingly, he prepared to wash their feet; a service which his disciples, from the customs of the country, had associated with the most menial situation. Peter could not endure the thought that he, to whom he had always looked up with reverence, as altogether his superior—he who stood in the exalted dignity of



the Messiah, should perform for him the most menial part of a servant's duty. The Saviour endeavored to gain the consent of Peter, by assuring him that though he did not then perceive what was intended by this transaction, yet when it had been performed, it should be explained to him. Peter still declined. Our Lord then solemnly assured him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Peter, either from overflowing affection, or from not entering into the spiritual import of the Saviour's declaration, exclaimed, "Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Our Lord then informed him that for the special object which he had in view, it was not necessary to receive a general washing of the body. Just as a person who has recently been bathed\* needs only to have his feet washed, which may have contracted defilement by walking in the dust—so the disciples, having already received a general cleansing, needed only carefully to preserve themselves from the defilements to which they were exposed. To speak without metaphor, the disciples had already experienced the general renewing of their hearts. This they ought not to expect again; but their attention should be directed to the avoiding of sin, and to the cultivating of those dispositions which char-

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\* Though in our translation the same term *wash* occurs twice in the tenth verse, yet in the original, two very distinct words are used; one of which, rendered "he that is washed," refers appropriately to a bathing of the whole body; while the other, rendered "to wash," refers to a partial washing, as that of the hands, or face, or feet. So that the tenth verse would have been more correctly translated, "He that has been bathed needeth not save to wash his feet," &c.

acterize the disciples of the Messiah. The particular trait, then inculcated, was humility ; humility so unfeigned and pervading, as to induce them to perform for each other, even the lowest and most troublesome services ; which would lead them, instead of inquiring among themselves, Who shall be greatest ? rather to inquire, Who shall be the least of all, and servant of all ?

Thus our Lord's design was not to give instruction respecting baptism ; nor is there in this passage any thing in the slightest degree at variance with the conclusion to which we arrived by examining the import of baptism.

In the third statement of this letter there is certainly much truth : " If the exact form of baptism were essential to its validity, the form would have been so clearly defined, that no honest mind could mistake it." If certain ends are to be answered by an ordinance, and those ends are connected with a certain outward representation, then it is necessary that the outward form be clearly defined ; else such a form may come into use as may entirely obscure the ends which the ordinance was intended to answer. If outward forms are appointed as emblems, they ought to be significant ; there ought to be a manifest correspondence between the emblem and the thing signified ; and the more spiritual the dispensation, the more simple and the more easily understood the emblem. Some men speak of forms and ceremonies, as being of little account in respect to the manner of performance, and as being subject to modifications, according to the various circumstances and

opinions of men. A scrupulous adherence to a particular form, they also represent as contrary to the spiritual nature of Christianity, and as arguing a grossness of conception in respect to the divine requisitions. But in such remarks there is more appearance than reality of spiritual elevation. If the Head of the church has appointed certain forms, it does not argue a commendable spirituality of feeling, that a man conceives himself at liberty to slight those forms. If those ceremonies, by the manner of their performance, are adapted and intended to answer certain ends, does elevation above the grossness of sense furnish an adequate excuse for essentially varying the manner and connecting with it some other lesson, or for receiving the intended lesson in some other than the more obvious way, or for refusing to draw any instruction from a matter subjected to the outward man? We show the truest regard for God by implicitly complying with his injunctions, and by impressing our hearts with just such lessons and in just such a manner as he has appointed. After all that may be said about Christianity being a spiritual dispensation, and its raising the mind above mere forms, it becomes us to remember that men are still only men; and God has most wisely consulted for the moral improvement of men by the few simple outward forms, as well as by the pure precepts, and the glorious prospects of Christianity.

Why, then, do honest minds mistake? Plainly, because they are not infallible; and because they may be under a vast variety of influences which may hinder the reception of the truth. Are there no other subjects, plain to a mind unbiased, yet

viewed in a mistaken manner by minds honest on every other subject? But suppose any refuse to examine for themselves; suppose they either fear to examine, or hastily think themselves incompetent to form an opinion: will they receive the knowledge of the truth? Suppose any examine under the influence of prejudice from various quarters; suppose they go not to the proper source of information; is it surprising that they come not to a true result? We forbear here to press the fact, that almost every person, who in a peculiarly conscientious frame of mind reads what the Scriptures declare concerning baptism, becomes shaken in regard to the sprinkling of infants and of others; and that scruples on this subject are often removed by turning away from the Bible, or by thinking that a person's usefulness at the present day forbids him to be a Baptist. And not a few, there is reason to believe, set their minds at rest by the persuasion that the inconveniencies attending the adoption of Baptist sentiments are so great, that they trust the Lord will pardon them in this one thing.

Since the form of this ordinance is thus necessary, we might expect it to be clearly defined. Dr. Griffin's fourth reason denies that it is thus defined. To this point, then, we now turn our attention.

There are two inquiries which may embrace all that needs to be said on this point. 1. Is there any thing in the circumstances in which this ordinance, during the time of Christ and his apostles, was administered, that requires divers modes of administration? 2. Is there any peculiar obscu

city in the language which speaks of this ordinance, by which it is prevented from having an equally definite meaning with other language, or by which we are unable to ascertain that meaning? These questions have so often been lucidly and satisfactorily answered in the negative, that we deem it superfluous on the present occasion to institute a new examination of them. Those who desire to pursue the investigation, are referred to the works on baptism, which have been published during the present year, and especially to the letters of Dr. Chapin, published in the year 1820. These letters, we question whether Dr. Griffin has ever read; else he could not expect to change the opinions of Baptists by statements that have long since been anticipated and met in a fair, manly way.

But leaving this topic, it has been to us a matter of surprise, that Dr. Griffin should write in so unguarded a manner. He seems to intimate that the three thousand believers on the day of Pentecost, (See Acts of the Apostles, Chap. ii.) were baptized by eleven men. Without insisting at present, that the scriptural account does not assert that three thousand were baptized on that day,\* just observe the unfairness of this intimation. In the first chapter, containing an account of what was transacted previously to the day of Pentecost, we are informed that the place of Judas was supplied by the election of Matthias, so that Matthias "was numbered with the eleven Apostles." During the lifetime, also, of our Lord, seventy disciples were appointed as his public ministers; two im-

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\* See the Note on page 69 of the Conversations. *Ed.*

portant facts, entirely overlooked. Dr. Griffin intimates that the local situation of Jerusalem, "on the top of a high hill," forbids the supposition of there being sufficient water. We would refer our readers to the statement of a certain Jewish writer, who, it may be presumed, was well acquainted with the situation of Jerusalem. He says, '*The mountains are round about Jerusalem.*' (See Psalm cxxv. 2.) Jerusalem was indeed built upon hills; but there were other hills around, and especially did Mount Olivet tower above the holy city. Is a hilly country necessarily poorly supplied with water? Who does not know, that on elevated spots springs may be found, when equally elevated places are contiguous, and especially in the neighborhood of still higher places? Dr. Griffin adds, "far from any river or brook deep enough for immersion." But must there necessarily have been a river or a brook? From the insinuations which are sometimes thrown out, one would think Jerusalem must have been utterly unfit to be the metropolis of a flourishing country; a country, too, whose prescribed religion required the constant use of water for purifications and ablutions, and all whose male inhabitants were required to assemble there three times every year. We have been told that not many years since, the Jordan was represented as only an insignificant streamlet, not sufficiently deep for immersing a man. But when knowledge had increased so much that even Baptists could detect the error, this representation fell into disuse. Who has ever proved that Jerusalem was sadly destitute of water? Does the well known fact of its having been a very populous city prove it? Does the fact that the Jews

from regard to religion and to cleanliness, made frequent use of bathing, prove it? Does the molten sea furnished by Solomon for the service of the temple, and which could hold about seven hundred barrels; and do the ten other lavers, each of which held between nine and ten barrels, prove it? And what shall we say of the fountain of Siloam, which, according to Josephus, had "water in it—in great plenty?"\* and of the pool at the sheep-gate, with its five porticos?

Of what avail, then, is the supposition respecting the two men brought up in the centre of the earth? Who could wonder, if men, brought up in the inside of the earth, should commit some very gross mistakes, on various matters that would be perfectly clear to common men, who had been brought up on the surface? Instead of making such a supposition, we would rather ask, what have been the opinions of men of learning, of confessed impartiality, of ability to investigate the subject, and of sufficient candor to state explicitly the result of their investigations, though that result should contradict their previous opinions, and even their continued practice? To a few testimonies of this kind, exhibiting the candid convictions of their authors, respecting the manner in which the ordinance was originally administered, we will now attend.

Dr. Campbell, Principal of the Marischall College, at Aberdeen, in Scotland, a minister of the Presbyterian church, whom few have equalled in the variety and extent, and accuracy of his literary and theological investigations, has expressed him-

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\* Jewish War : Book v. Chapter iv. § 1.

self in the following manner. "The word *περιτομή* (*peritomé*,) the Latins translated *circumcisio*, (*circumcision*,) which exactly corresponds in etymology, but the word *βαπτισμα*, (*baptisma*,) they have retained, changing only the letters from Greek to Roman. Yet the latter was just as susceptible of a literal version into Latin as the former. *Immersio*, (*immersion*,) answers as exactly in the one case as *circumcisio*, (*circumcision*,) in the other. . . . . We have deserted the Greek names where the Latins have deserted them, and have adopted them where the Latins have adopted them. Hence we say *circumcision*, and not *peritomy*; and we do not say *immersion*, but *baptism*. Yet when the language furnishes us with materials for a version so exact and analogical, such a version conveys the sense more perspicuously than a foreign name. For this reason I should think the word *immersion* a better English name than *baptism*, were we now at liberty to make a choice."\*

In the same author's notes upon the Gospel by Matthew, occur the following statements. (Chap. iii. verse 11.) "*In water—in the Holy Spirit*, *εν ὕδατι—εν ἁγίῳ πνεύματι*. English translation, *with water—with the Holy Ghost*. Vulgate, *in aqua—in Spiritu Sancto*. Thus also the Syriac and other ancient versions. I am sorry to observe that the Popish translators from the Vulgate, have shown greater veneration for the style of that version than the generality of Protestant translators have shown for that of the original. For in this the Latin is not more explicit than the Greek. Yet so inconsistent

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\* Preliminary Dissertations; VIII. Part II. § 2.



are the interpreters last mentioned, that none of them have scrupled to render *εν τῷ Ιορδανῇ*, in the sixth verse, *in Jordan*, though nothing can be plainer than that if there be any incongruity in the expression *in water*, this *in Jordan* must be equally incongruous. But they have seen that the preposition *in*, could not be avoided there, without adopting a circumlocution, and saying, *with the water of Jordan*, which would have made their deviation from the text too glaring. The word βαπτίζεν' (rendered *to baptize*), 'both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies *to dip, to plunge, to immerse*, and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin Fathers, *tingere*, the term used for dyeing cloth, which was by immersion. It is always construed suitably to this meaning. Thus it is, *εν ὕδατι, εν τῷ Ιορδανῇ*. But I should not lay much stress on the preposition *εν*, which, answering to the Hebrew *ב*, may denote *with* as well as *in*, did not the whole phraseology, in regard to this ceremony, concur in evincing the same thing. Accordingly, the baptized are said *αναβαίνειν*, *to arise, emerge, or ascend*, v. 16. *απο του ὕδατος*, and Acts viii. 39. *εκ του ὕδατος*, *from or out of the water*. Let it be observed further, that the verbs *ραινω* and *ραντίζω*, used in Scripture for *sprinkling*, are never construed in this manner. When, therefore, the Greek word βαπτίζω' (rendered *I baptize*), 'is adopted, I may say, rather than translated into modern languages, the mode of construction ought to be preserved, so far as may conduce to suggest its original import. It is to be regretted that we have so much evidence that even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped by the sentiments and customs of the sect which they prefer. The true partizan, of whatever

er denomination, always inclines to correct the diction of the spirit, by that of the party.'

The following extract is from another work of the same author. "Another error in disputation, which is by far too common, is when one will admit nothing in the plea, or arguments of an adversary to be of the smallest weight. I have heard a disputant of this stamp, in defiance of etymology and use, maintain that the word rendered in the New Testament *baptize*, means more properly to sprinkle than to plunge; and, in defiance of all antiquity, that the former method was the earliest, and for many centuries, the most general practice in baptizing. One who argues in this manner, never fails, with persons of knowledge, to betray the cause he would defend; and though with respect to the vulgar, bold assertions generally succeed, as well as arguments, sometimes better, yet a candid mind will disdain to take the help of a falsehood, even in support of the truth."\*

We now present an extract from Storr's Biblical Theology, published at Andover, 1826; merely premising that Storr was an eminent theologian in the Lutheran church. "The disciples of our Lord could understand his command in no other manner, than as enjoining immersion; for the baptism of John, to which Jesus himself submitted, and also the earlier baptism (John iv. 1.) of the disciples of Jesus, were performed by dipping the subject into cold water; as is evident from the following passages. Matt. iii. 6, βαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, were baptized in Jordan, v. 16. Ἰησοῦς

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\* Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, p. 181. Boston Edition, 1832.

ανέβη απο του ὕδατος, Jesus ascended out of the water. John iii. 23, ὅτι ὕδατα πολλὰ ἦν ἐκεῖ, because there was much water there.

“And that they actually did understand it so, is proved, partly by those passages in the New Testament, which evidently allude to immersion. Acts viii. 36, &c. ὅτε ανέβησαν ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος, when they had come up out of the water. v. 39. xvi. 12—15, παρὰ ποταμόν, at the river. Rom. vi. 4, συνεταφήμεν αὐτῷ (τῷ Χριστῷ) δια τοῦ βαπτισματος, ἵνα ὥσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστός ἐκ νεκρῶν, are buried with him, (Christ) by baptism, so that as Christ was raised from the dead, &c. Compare Col. ii. 12, and 1 Peter iii. 21, where baptism is termed the *antitype* (αντιτυπον) of the flood. And partly, from the fact, that immersion was so customary in the ancient church, that even in the third century the baptism of the sick, who were merely sprinkled with water, was entirely neglected by some, and by others was thought inferior to the baptism of those who were in health, and who received baptism not merely by aspersion, but who actually bathed themselves in water. This is evident from Cyprian (Epist. 69. ed. Bremæ, p. 185, &c.,) and Eusebius, (Hist. Eccles. l. vi. cap. 43,) where we find the following extract from the letter of the Roman Bishop Cornelius: ‘Novatus receiving baptism on a sick bed, by aspersion, (περιχυθεῖς,) if it can be said that such a person received baptism.’ ‘No person who had, during sickness, been baptized by aspersion, was admitted into the clerical office.’ Moreover, the old custom of immersion was also retained a long time in the western church, at least in the case of those who were not indisposed. And, even after aspersion had been fully intro-

duced in a part of the western churches, there yet remained several, who for some time adhered to the ancient custom. Under these circumstances, it is certainly to be lamented, that Luther was not able to accomplish his wish with regard to the introduction of immersion in baptism, as he had done in the restoration of wine in the Eucharist," pp. 290, 291. A few lines after, speaking of the change of the ancient custom of immersion, he says, "It ought not to have been made."\*

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\* The preceding extract is from an English translation of a work in German; which German work is a translation from the Latin of Storr's Christian Doctrine, accompanied with notes and illustrations, by Professor Flatt. It is worthy of being known, that the translator into English has employed certain terms in this connexion, which are not warranted by the real opinions of Storr. We refer to the "caption, or summary view of contents," prefixed to the illustration from which the extract is taken. By referring to the work, our readers may see that the following sentence introduces this illustration: "*The primitive mode was probably by immersion.*" This qualified remark, so poorly adapted to the illustration which it introduces, did not proceed from Storr, but from the translator into English. With Storr the truth of what he asserts was not a matter of mere probability, but of moral certainty. The following expression deserves also to be specified: "who actually bathed themselves in water." The words which Storr used are, when correctly translated, *were bathed*. The use of the word *themselves*, intimating by its connexion, that the baptized performed the operation themselves, like the Jewish proselytes, did not originate with Storr. In proof of what we have stated, we copy the original Latin of Storr.

Quum discipulos baptizari jussit Dominus (Matt. xxviii. 19,) apostoli per ea, quæ antecesserant (Jo. i. 25, 26, 28, 31, 33. iv. 1, 2. coll. Matt. iii. 6, 16. Jo. iii. 23,) nihil aliud intelligere potuerunt, quam *immergendos* esse homines aqua, nec intellexerunt profecto aliud, nisi

Storr mentions the wish of Luther respecting the use of immersion. In the appendix to Professor Chase's sermon, is an extract from the works of Luther, in which that eminent reformer very explicitly states his conviction in regard to baptism.

Passing by the concessions which might be drawn from the commentaries of Macknight, and Rosenmueller, and others, we invite attention to two or three sentences from the *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus* of Suicer; a work in two folio volumes, exhibiting a digest of the voluminous theological writings of the Greek Fathers.

‘The going under and then rising in baptism was

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immersionem, ut sacrarum literarum testimonio (Acts viii. 36—39. xvi. 13—15. Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12. 1 Peter iii. 21.) et priscæ ecclesiæ usur (v. *Suiceri* Thess. eccles. voc. *αναδωω*, et *Binghami* Orig. eccl. l. xi. c. xi. Opp. Lond. 1726. Anglice editorum Vol. I. p. 521. ss.) patet, quo *immersio* ita recepta fuerat, ut seculo adhuc tertio vel *clinicorum* baptismus propterea, quod perageretur *affundenda* aqua, ab aliis omnino rejectus, ab aliis certe baptismo reliquorum, qui sani baptizati, h. e. aqua salutaris non ægrorum more perfusi, aut adpersi, sed loti (Eph. v. 26. Tit. iii. v. 1 Peter iii. 21. cf. Ebr. x. 22,) essent, longe posthabitus fuerit (v. *Cypriani* Ep. 69. ed. Brem. p. 185. ss. et *Cornelium*, Romanæ ecclesiæ episcopum, apud *Eusebium* l. vi. H. E. c. 43. p. 244. s.) Ceterum vetus consuetudo certe in iis, qui sani baptizabantur, etiam in occidentali ecclesia diu servata est, imo tum quoque, cum partim ex ecclesiis occidentalibus, immutato pristino more, affusionem universe introduxissent, non defuerunt aliæ quæ veterem consuetudinem tenere aliquamdiu pergerent. Quæ cum ita sint, id omnino dolendum est (cf. *Buddei* Inst. theol. dogm. p. 1444—1446,) quod *Luthero* nostro optata, quæ de immersionis usurpatione in baptismo deinceps administrando æque, ac de calicis usu communi in sacra coena, optavit (v. Opp. Lips. 1729. T. xvii. p. 272, 536,) ex altera duntaxat parte licuit perficere.—*Doctrinæ Christianæ Pars Theoretica e Sacris Literis Repetita.* pp. 313, 314.

used, that thus the resurrection and the burial of Christ might be shadowed forth. This the ancient writers teach.\*

‘This *going under* and then *rising*, was in use in the first centuries which immediately succeeded the apostolic age. This is plain from those testimonies of the Fathers which with sufficient copiousness have already been adduced.†

These declarations are abundantly sustained by appropriate extracts from the Fathers, as any one may see by consulting the work.

See also the result to which this learned author was led in regard to the subjects of baptism in the primitive ages, by his lengthened and laborious investigation of the early Christian writers:—

‘In the first two centuries, no one received baptism, unless being instructed in the faith, and imbued with the doctrine of Christ, he could testify that he was a believer—on account of these words, *He that believeth and is baptized*. Therefore, to believe preceded. Thence arose in the church the order of Catechumens. It was also then the constant custom, that the Eucharist should be given to those Catechumens immediately after baptism. Afterwards the opinion prevailed, that no one could be saved unless he had been baptized. But because formerly the Eucharist was given to adult

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\* *Καταδυσίς* ista et *Αναδυσίς* idio in Baptismo fuit adhibita. ut sepultura et resurrectio Christi hac ratione adumbrarentur. Id docent veteres.—*Tom. 1. p. 260. Art. αναδυω.*

† Hæc autem *demersio* et *emersio* primis aliquot seculis, quæ Apostolicum ævum proximè exceperunt, in usu fuit. Patet hoc ex iis Veterum testimoniis, quæ copiosè satis hucusque adducta sunt.—*Tom. 1. p. 261. Art. αναδυω.*

Catechumens as soon they had been bathed in sacred baptism, this also was appointed to be done in the case of infants, after Pedobaptism was introduced.\*

Such were the sentiments of this learned man; sentiments which resulted from twenty years' indefatigable researches among the writings of the early Christian Fathers.†

Had there, then, been no departure from primitive practice, immersion would have been universal. But can this departure from the originally established form be justified? Yes, say some men;

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\* *Primis duobus seculis nemo Baptismum accipiebat, nisi qui, in fide instructus, et doctrinâ Christi imbutus, testari posset, se credere, propter illa verba, Qui crediderit, et baptizatus fuerit. Ergo prius erat credere. Inde ordo Catechumenorum in Ecclesia. Mos etiam tum perpetuus constanter observatus fuit, ut secundum Baptismum Catechumenis illis statim daretur Eucharistia. Postea opinio invaluit, neminem salvari posse, nisi qui baptizatus fuisset. Quia autem Catechumenis adulti olim simul ac loti fuissent sacro Baptismate, dabatur Eucharistia, hoc etiam in infantibus ut fieret institutum. post Pædobaptismum introductum.—Tom. II. p. 1131. Art. Συναξίς IV. b.*

† The following is the title of his work: Joh. Caspari Suiceri SS. Lingg. in Schola Tigurina Professoris Publici Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus e Patribus Græcis, Ordine Alphabetico, exhibens, quæcunque Phrases, Ritus, Dogmata Hæreses, et hujusmodi alia spectant. Insertis infinitis pené vocibus, loquendique generibus Græcis, hactenus à Lexicographis vel nondum vel obiter saltem tractatis. Opus Novum, Viginti annorum indefesso labore adornatum. Amstelædami, MDCLXXXII.

It will be gratifying to many of our readers to know that, by the munificence of a generous friend, an extensive collection of the early Greek and Latin Fathers, selected with much care in Europe, has recently been added to the library of the Newton Theological Institution.

‘because the change of the ancient custom of immersion, although it ought not to have been made, destroys nothing that is essential to this ceremony as it was instituted by our Saviour.’ But surely it is essential to this ceremony that it be the significant action ordained by our Lord. The change which human contrivance has introduced may answer some of the purposes intended, yet in other respects it destroys the significance of the ordinance. Immersion expresses the whole ; but any substitute necessarily omits a part of what was intended to be expressed. Shall we, then, make void any part of God’s commands, through a confessedly human contrivance ?

Dr. Griffin’s fifth remark, that “if nothing but immersion is baptism, there is no visible church except among the Baptists,” is a conclusion of his own forming, for which we have already disclaimed all responsibility. The fact, however, that God pours out his Spirit upon Pedobaptists in their assemblies, and “at the table of the Lord,” that they “spread around them the savor of the Redeemer’s name by their holy examples and evangelical efforts,” and that they “are a great majority of the chosen instruments to carry the gospel to the heathen,” can be explained otherwise than by referring it to the Divine acknowledgment of their being churches. The error which our Pedobaptist brethren cherish, though producing injurious effects, cannot prevent all the consequences which appropriately flow from the many precious truths which they maintain. When their ministers preach repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly and forcibly, God



will bless his truth. When they devote their wealth and their exertions to the spread of the gospel, God will bless their efforts, notwithstanding the error with which they have enveloped a part of Divine truth. But it becomes them to consider whether, if they should receive the whole truth of God, and open their hearts to its whole influence, a still greater blessing would not rest upon them, both at home and abroad; and whether they would not be happily freed from many perplexing and hurtful circumstances. It is our belief, that if, with all their present advantages for growing in piety, and for usefulness, they also should abandon error respecting baptism, and come under the influence of the whole truth as it is in Jesus, the result would be inconceivably happy.

What occurs under the sixth head is so similar to what immediately precedes, that we deem it unnecessary to make any additional explanations. We will only ask, whether, supposing it to be true, that Pedobaptist 'preachers are not church members, and therefore have no right to preach, and certainly are not ministers of Christ, and therefore have no right to administer the Lord's supper, and are guilty of awful profanity in doing this,' whether, even supposing all this to be indubitably true, Dr. Griffin seriously believes that God would drive them from the earth like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Does he honestly believe this? Men sometimes speak boldly, rather than soberly. What if we should hear of a profane company of young men meeting, during a revival of religion, for the express purpose of celebrating in mockery the ordinance of the Lord's supper; and it should

be told us that He who is long suffering and abundant in mercy, did not cause the earth to open and to swallow up the offenders ; but that on the contrary, so marvellous are the ways of God, there was fastened on the conscience of one, such a conviction of guilt that he found no peace till he applied to that Saviour with whose sufferings he had been sporting :—Would this exceed the bounds of belief? The dispensation under which we are permitted to live does not require those immediate, outward manifestations of divine displeasure which were appropriate to a former age.

The remarks under the seventh head, and under the eighth, imply that the refusing to mingle ourselves with our Pedobaptist brethren in celebrating the Lord's supper, is a violation of the spirit of Christian love and union ; and arises from bigotry and selfishness. Thus we come back to the hackneyed commonplace in which many people indulge themselves. And is it Dr. Griffin that is treading upon this beaten ground? a man who seems to perceive on what principle the Baptists withhold from uniting with others at the Lord's table, and who assents to the correctness of the principle ; a man who has been understood to vindicate Baptists from the charge of illiberality, and who has been understood to say that if his sentiments on baptism corresponded with those of the Baptists, he would practise as they do in regard to communion? Henceforth we will not wonder when the unreflecting multitude thus accuse us. We will leave our cause with God, and earnestly implore that we and all our Christian brethren may be more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Lord Jesus ; that the strife of tongues

may cease ; that whether we, or they, are in fault, error may be exposed, and that under the mild influences of truth, the church of the Lord may flourish.

Our hearts were pained by the unkind remarks under these heads. Let any Christian solemnly reflect on the endearing relation which subsists among the children of God, the expectants of heavenly bliss ; let him warm his heart by meditating on the love of Jesus Christ, and by communing with his Lord and Master, and we persuade ourselves he will regret that such a train of thought should have been expressed, when the conscientious, self-denying practice of acknowledged brethren in Christ was the subject. We judge not the author of these remarks. We believe the recollection of his having made them, and of his having permitted them to be published, must excite some painful emotions. There is, too, so manifest a difference between the casting of such reflections, and the manner in which the letter commences, that one might be excused for doubting whether both parts came from the same pen. But so it is. And we are compelled to place this among the proofs, that age and experience, dignity and piety, may swerve from Christian kindness and rectitude ; may be mingled with human imperfections, and may still have occasion in brokenness of heart to seek forgiveness from that Saviour who can abundantly pardon.

We refuse not to associate at the Lord's table with other Christians because we are bigoted, or selfish, or because we wish "to shut our adherents in by a sort of impassable gulf." The practice for which we are censured is not recommended to us except by a regard to what we think the will of our Lord. Nor is the practice at all inconsistent with the purest and most generous Christian love. For we can love our brethren with pure hearts fervently, while yet we do not join with them in every religi-

ous observance. There are occasions, and those of perpetual occurrence, on which the expressions of Christian affection are less questionably genuine, than the occasion afforded by celebrating the Lord's supper. Our practice does not imply want of love for the disciples of our Lord; it implies conscientious adherence to principles which we think our Lord has established in his church. Nor is our practice at all inconsistent with the fact, that all true Christians will commune together in heaven; for the communion of soul which the redeemed will enjoy in heaven is a different thing from celebrating the Lord's supper.

The names of 'the celebrated Robert Hall, and of the late excellent Dr. Stillman, are indeed dear; but we remember that our Lord has cautioned his disciples to call no man master upon earth. It may be well also, to mention, that however applauded Mr. Hall's liberality may be, it proceeds 'entirely on the ground that baptism is not an indispensable prerequisite to communion;' a principle, the propriety of which, in the commencement of this letter, Dr. Griffin expressly disowns. Besides, Mr. Hall has himself made statements on the subject of communion which are quite as illiberal as the current statements of those against whom Dr. Griffin has written. In his Reply to Kinghorn, Mr. Hall observes, 'This author had informed us at the distance of a few lines, that the Pedobaptists in general believe that none ought to come to the Lord's table who are not baptized. If this is correct, we may indeed easily conceive of their being offended with us for deeming them unbaptized; but *how our refusal to admit them to communion should become the subject of debate, is utterly mysterious.\**

Again: in another of his pieces on Communion, Mr. Hall has thus expressed himself: 'They,' the

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\*Works of Robert Hall. First complete edition; New York. Vol. 1. p. 156.

Baptists, 'act precisely on the same principle with all other Christians, who assume it for granted that baptism is an essential preliminary to the reception of the sacrament. The point on which they differ, is the nature of that institution; which we,' the Baptists, 'place in immersion, and of which we suppose rational and accountable agents the only fit subjects. Let it be admitted that *baptism is under all circumstances a necessary condition of church fellowship, and it is impossible for the Baptists to act otherwise.* Their practice is the infallible consequence of the opinion generally entertained respecting communion, conjoined with their peculiar views of the baptismal rite. *The recollection of this may suffice to rebut the ridicule, and silence the clamor, of those who loudly condemn the Baptists for a proceeding which, were they but to change their opinion on the subject of baptism, their own principles would compel them to adopt.* They both concur in a common principle, from which *the practice deemed so offensive is the necessary result.\**'

As to the 'excellent Dr. Stillman,' who is said to have stood 'at the head of the liberal class' in America, we have reason to believe that the case is not quite so clear as one would suppose from Dr. Griffin's remark. But what if it were? Must we be governed by names? Our faith must not stand in the wisdom of men.†

Some topics are named in this letter which do not materially affect the leading point; such as, the bap-

\* Works, &c. Vol. 1. p. 285.

† Since writing the above, the following letter has been received from a much esteemed and well known individual, for many years a deacon in the church of which Dr. Stillman was the pastor.

"Your note is just received, making inquiry respecting Dr. Stillman's sentiments on communion. The Doctor was a man of a most catholic spirit; and he always felt so ardent an attachment to, and such an intimate union with, all whom he believed to be real Christians, that I think, had he consulted his *feelings* only, he would have avowed himself an open communionist. But from all that I ever heard him say on the subject, I believe he did not consider the practice correct.

tism administered by John, and the purpose for which our Saviour received baptism. We therefore omit the consideration of these topics, and refer those who wish to see a brief yet comprehensive view of them, to the sermon on *the design of baptism*, which has already been named.

Though so far as our present purpose is concerned, the topics just named may be waived, yet on the general question of baptism they ought by no means to be omitted. For the fact that baptism had been frequently administered by divine authority previously to the final commission of the apostles, is one of the circumstances which must be taken into account when we endeavor to view ourselves as in the same situation in which the apostles were when they received that commission. A recent advocate for infant sprinkling\* contends earnestly (but not more earnestly than he ought), that in order to know how the apostles would understand the language of the commission, we must as far as possible conceive ourselves to be in their situation at that time. Now applying this principle, we observe, that the disciples of our Lord previously to receiving their final commission had for several years been witnessing the administration of baptism by the divinely appointed harbinger of the Messiah, and had them-

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"I have heard Dr. Baldwin say that when Dr. Stillman first came to Boston, his evangelical brethren in the ministry of the Pedobaptist denomination expected that he would commune with them; and that their opinion was grounded on some remarks made by Dr. Stillman, which were understood by them to be favorable to such communion. The Doctor, however, found the brethren of his church and other Baptists unfavorable to the intercourse, and he gave it up; and my opinion is, that he did not consider it either expedient or correct. In fact, having never suspected him, during his life, to favor open communion, I never asked him particularly as to his own views on the subject; and it was not till after his death, when Dr. Ephraim Eliot's pamphlet was published, that I had the conversation referred to with Dr. Baldwin. I never knew him to communicate at the Lord's table with Pedobaptists: nor were any other than immersed professing believers ever admitted to communicate with his church during the fourteen years in which I delightedly sat under his affectionate ministry.

Very respectfully yours,

JAMES LORING."

\* Dr. Woods, of Andover.

selves administered baptism under their Lord's immediate direction. [See John iii. 26. iv. 1, 2.] That all these instances of baptism had a very direct reference to the Messiah's dispensation, we presume no one will question. Thus baptism, *administered by divine authority*, was to them, when the commission was last given, no new thing. Having been accustomed to baptism, how would they naturally proceed when they were commissioned to go into all the world, to teach all nations, baptizing them? Clearly they would proceed in the manner to which they had been accustomed, unless some special directions had been given to pursue a different course. Such a direction seems to have been given as to the form of words in connexion with which the ordinance was to be administered; but neither from the commission itself, nor from the subsequent history of the apostles, is there the least satisfactory evidence, that they were authorized to depart from the original institution, either as to the action to be performed, or as to the persons on whom it was to be performed.

There is one other point to which we would direct the attention of our readers. Under the fourth head of this letter, occurs the following sentence: 'There is a great variety in the manner of their [different denominations'] 'keeping the supper, administering baptism, performing prayer, and conducting all the forms of public worship.' Thus the manner in which baptism is performed is put upon a level with the unprescribed circumstances attending the administration of the Lord's supper, the performance of prayer, and other forms of public worship. It has often been intimated that it is quite as immaterial in what manner baptism be performed, as it is in what manner prayer be performed, whether in a standing or a kneeling posture; that it is quite as reasonable to hold a controversy on the question whether we must kneel or stand in prayer,

as on the question, whether in baptism we must be immersed or not. Thus Baptists are represented as contending about a mere circumstance of a religious rite, whereas it is their continual profession that they are contending about the rite itself. The illustration drawn from prayer and from the administration of the Lord's supper is by no means appropriate. For whether prayer be performed by a person kneeling, sitting, standing, or lying down, still it is prayer, as no particular manner is prescribed. Whether the Lord's supper be administered to persons sitting or reclining according to the custom which prevailed in Palestine, still it is the Lord's supper; for we have no directions concerning posture, and there is nothing which is intended to be expressed by the Lord's supper that is inconsistent with either posture. But in the other ordinance, the form is prescribed, just as really as it would appear to be, if the original word, instead of being *adopted* or *transferred* from the Greek into the English language, had been *translated*. It would then have been expressed, in plain English, by the word *immersion*. Moreover, something essential to the ordinance, as to what it is intended to represent, is omitted if any thing be substituted for immersion. So that our controversy is not respecting the form of baptism, but respecting baptism itself; not whether persons shall be baptized in this or in that way, but whether they shall be *baptized*. Pedobaptists say, any one of certain things is baptism; we say only one of those things is baptism. The controversy then is about the thing, not about a circumstance of the thing. The illustration drawn from prayer and from the Lord's supper would be apposite, if the matter in controversy were, whether the validity of baptism be affected by the circumstance of the candidate's standing or kneeling in the water, or by the circumstance of prayer's preceding or following his immersion. But plainly about mere



circumstances we have no dispute ; and it is unjust and unkind to compare the manner of baptism to the posture in prayer and at the Lord's table. We repeat it, the controversy is about the thing itself. Baptists view themselves as contending for the very existence of a Christian ordinance; as contending, not whether baptism shall be administered in this or in that way, but whether it shall be retained in the church.

The views of other denominations respecting baptism are not definite ; with them, immersion, pouring, sprinkling, are all equally valid baptism. With Baptists, immersion only is acknowledged as baptism. Other denominations then may without any peculiar generosity or kindness invite us to come to the Lord's table ; for they admit that we are baptized. We, however, cannot invite and encourage them, without violating our conscience, because we cannot consider them as baptized, i. e. *immersed*, according to the command of our Lord. There is then a manifest difference between the two cases ; and since it is the Pedobaptists who have departed from the command, we confidently and solemnly ask, who are to be blamed for the want of union between them and us?

We pray that knowledge and holiness may increase. We call upon all the friends of Christ to search the Scriptures. We affectionately entreat them to remember his words, *If ye love me, keep my commandments* ; and thus to examine themselves, in respect to baptism as well as in respect to other duties, whenever they think of the memorials of his death. And may all who keep the ordinances as they were originally delivered, become living proofs that their baptism is not an unmeaning ceremony, but a powerful incitement to walk in newness of life.

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